

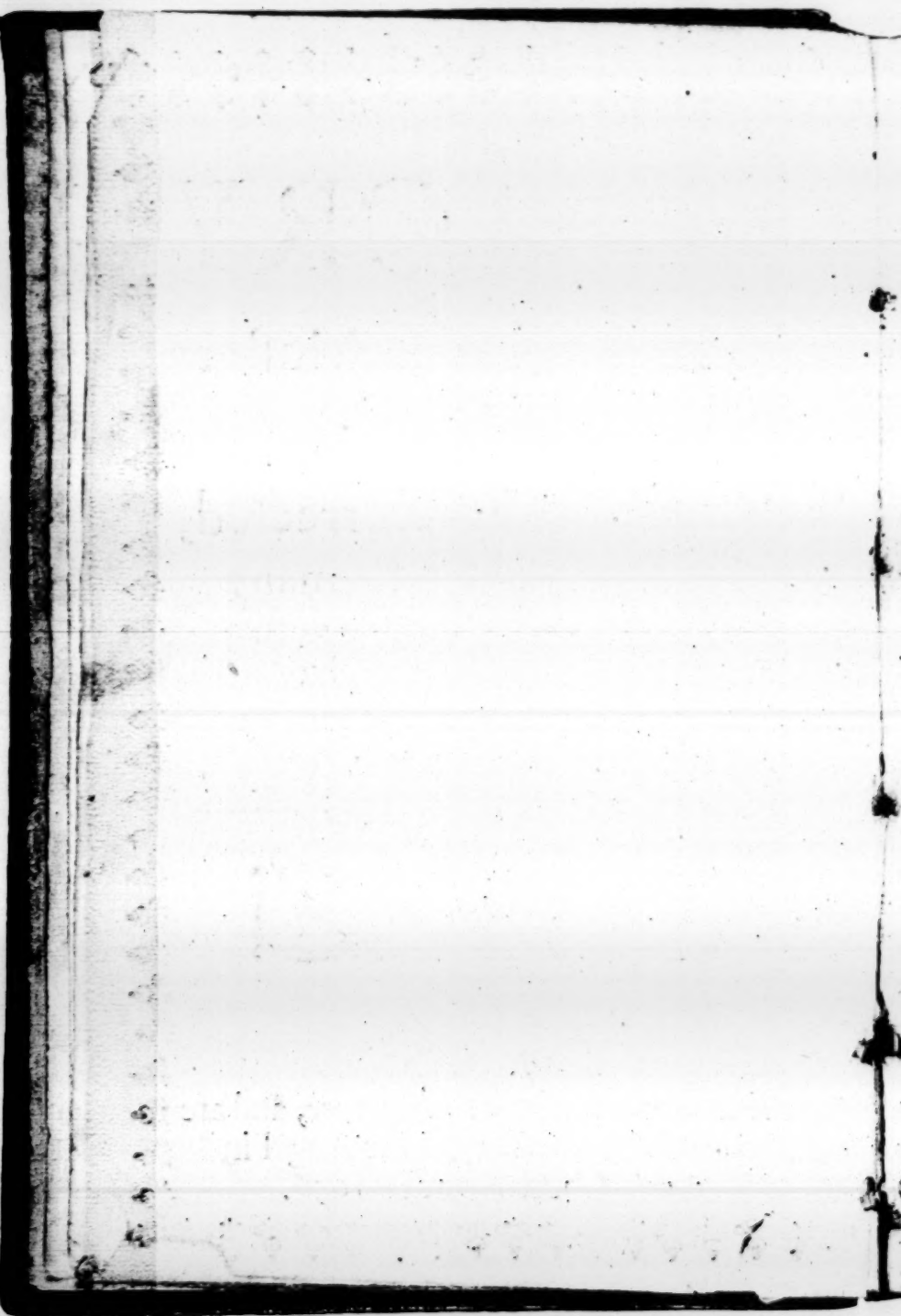
THE  
HISTORY  
OF

The Seven wise Masters  
of ROME.

Now newly Corrected,  
better explained in many  
places, and enlarged with  
many pretty Pictures, live-  
ly expressing the full  
HISTORY.



LONDON,  
Printed by R.I. for E. Blackmore, and are  
to be sold at his shop at the Angel in  
Pauls Church-yard. 1656.







## To the Reader.

**R** Eader: for thy better delight, and more plainly to set forth this History to thy view, I have to my great cost, added many Pictures, lively expressing the most materiall points contained in every Example: for which pains of mine, If I may receive thy thanks, I think it a sufficient reward. The *History* of it self is both ancient and moral, and containeth in it much of that learning; When Ignorance having a thick and dull ear, men were compelled to draw the rude multitude to attention of good instruction, by such pleasing allurements of Tales and Fables, as in this book is set down; that as the mind is sed and delighted with the sweetness and fabulous *Story*, the Soul it self at the end (by often tasting the same nourishment) grows quicker-sighted to behold the hidden and mystical wisdom contained under such close Riddles. For in few words to give you the meaning of this *Moral*, it is thus: The Emperour may signifie the *World*, who having but one onely Son (who is *Man*) him to bring up well is all his care. But *Man*

## To the Reader.

losing his own Mother (who is *Reason* or divine *Grace*) and falling into the hands of his Step-mother signifying Sin) who is an Empress of great bewitching, and one that commands the *World*, shee works by all means possible the utter confusion of *Man*.

And would prevail against his weakness, but that a Star from Heaven (by which is meant goodness from above) instructs *Man* how to avoid the allurements of Sin, by not opening his mouth, to bid her welcome. And the better to prevent her mischief, he hath *Seven wise Masters*, which are seven liberal Sciences, to give him wholesome instructions, and by those helps save him from mortal danger. So that being thus armed, *Man* liveth to batter down sin (figured in the death of the Empress and her Minions) And in the end, to gain a rich Crown of glory and happiness set ready for all those that in this life labour to attain to Heaven by doing well.

This is the explanation of this Moral;  
of which if thou makest right use, it  
will be as a rich banquet to thy  
soul. Farewell.

Here



# Here beginneth the History of the seven Wise Masters of R O M E,

Containing many pleasant and witty  
narrations, very delightful to the Reader

The entrance into the moral, which (ac-  
cording to things of Comick pleasure) properly  
begins with a Funeral.

**S**ometime in the City of Rome  
there was a famous Emperoz  
named Pontianus, a man of  
great wisdom: he took to his  
Wife a Kings Daughter that  
was very fair, amiable, to all  
people gracious, & to her Husband right dear  
she conceived by him & was delivered of a Son  
named Dioclesian. The child grew apace, and  
of all people was beloved: and when he was of  
the age of seven years, his Mother the Em-  
press falling sick, and feeling her self that shee  
might not live, sent after her Lord the Empe-  
roz (being rode forth on progress) a messenger,  
that he should return without tarrying, if ever  
he would see her alive.

## The seven wise



And when he was come she said unto him, oh my dear Lord, of this infirmity I may not escape, wherefore the natural & tender love and care that is in me towards you and your Son, makes a sute to you before my death: he answered, desire what you wil, for I shal not deny you any thing. Then said she, After my death you shall take another wife, as is most convenient, wherefore I instantly beseech you, that she ober my son have no power nor governance, but that he be kept and nourished far from her, and that he may be trained up in learning and wisdom. The Emperoz then answered. My most dear wife, your petition in all things shal be fulfilled and performed: Then turned the Emperesse and gave up the ghost. Many days after, the Empe-

## Masters.

roz bewailed and mourned her death, and long after her burping he shewed his heaviness and sorrow & would in no wise marry or be joyful.

How the Emperor committed and delivered his Son to the seven wise Masters to be instructed in learning.

**U**Pon a time as the Emperoz lay in his bed, hee bethought him inwardly of his Son, saying in his heart, I have onely but one son the which shall be mine heir, it is good whilst he is young that he be set to learn cunning & wisdom, by the which he may after my death govern and rule the Empire. Intimating thereby that a worthy Prince taking upon him so great a weight and charge as the government of a Kingdome, ought first to learn to be his own governor, and to master his own affections. So that when he was early risen up from his bed, he caused to be called the Lords of his Counsell befoze him, and of them took advice what were best therein to be done. And they answered, Lord, in Rome are seven wise Masters, who lye in great fame for their excellency in Arts, grabe Counsell, and Instruction, let them be sent for & deliber them your Son to be fostered and instructed in learning. The Emperoz understanding that, sent his letters made powerfull by his own Seal, to the seven wise Masters, that they incontinently should come to him without delay: And they anon came befoze the

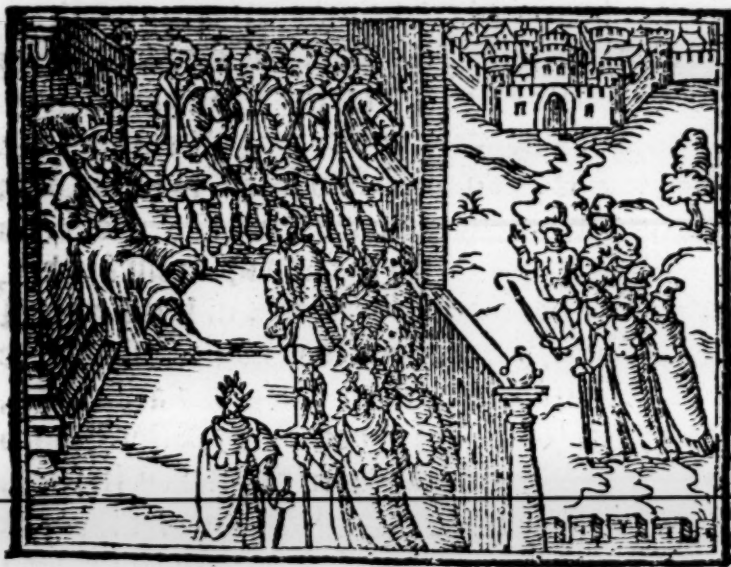
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Emperoz



## The seven wise

Emperoz, & hee demanded of them if they knew to wherefore that he had sent for them? they answered, The cause is as your will intendeth we know not, but if it please you to shew us your mind and intent, we be ready to fulfil it to the utmost of our powers. To whom the Noble Emperoz said, I have but one Son, the which I shall deliver unto you to conform in all good waies of learning & vertue, so that by your doctrine and wisdom, he may more wisely guide and govern the Empire after my decease.



The first Master named Pancolias, said Lord deliver to me your Son, and I shall teach him as much cunning within seven yeares as I and all my fellows can.

Then spake the second Master, named Lantulus,

## Masters.

hu, sir, of long time I haue serbed you, and hitherto I haue had no manner of rewarde, I demand nothing else of you, but that you deliber me your Son to keepe and govern, and I shall make him as cunning within six years as I and all my fellows be.

The third Master named Craton said, My Lord, many times I haue been with you upon the Sea in perill of my life, and of you haue I had no manner of rewarde: if that I might for my recompence, now, obtain that you will boughsale to commit your Son under my rule and governance, I should inform him as much within fife years, if his wit wil thereto attain as I and my fellows can.

Then stood up the fourth master named Malquidrak, who was right learn of body, and said, My Lord, call to your remembrance how that I and all my predecessors haue serbed Emperors, and haue receiued no manner of rewarde, wherfore I shall ask no other thing, but that ye will deliber me your Son to inform & teach, and I shall make him to take as much science and wisdom within four years, as I and all my fellows haue learned in all our liues.

Then spake the fifth Master that was named Japhus. Lord, I am old, and many times I am called to your Counsell, and you know that my Counsell hath abailed and profited you. and so likewise may it do hereafter: yet notwithstanding



## The seven wise

standing I desire no more, but that you will desire me your Son, and I shall instruct and inform him in as much cunning and science, that hee within 3 years shall profit in wit as much as I and all my fellows have.

Then came forth the sixth Master named Cleophas, who said like to the other, promising him to learn and inform the Child in all their cunning in two years.

The seventh Master rose up and said, who also desired the Child, and promised to learn him within one year, the sciences and wisdom of them all.

When all this was done, the Emperoz said, My trusty friends, I am very much bound to thank you all; and every one of you, for that you have so earnestly with attention desired to foster and instruct my Son: If I should now commit him to one and not to another, thereupon would insue much dissention and variance among you. Wherefore to you all, and every of you, I commit my son to be nourished & taught. The Masters hearing this, expressing both their greatness of joy, and forwardnesse in will to the Emperoz, all with one harmony of consent took and received his Son, and led him towards the Court of Rome. Upon the way spoke Craton to his fellows. If we this Child should teach within the City of Rome, there is so great resort and concourse of people, that

it

## Masters.

it would hinder and let him in his learning: I know a fair place from Rome some 2 miles, right pleasant and delectable, there let us make a four-square Chamber of stone, and put him therein: and upon the walls thereof let us paint and write the seven liberall Arts, so that the Child at all times may see and behold his doctrine therein as well as in his Book: and this advice and counsell pleased them all, and was done accordingly in every point. The Masters diligently every day during seven years, taught and instructed the child, and determined amongst themselves, and said, It is good that wee examine our Disciple to see to what perfection our pains hath arrived at, and to what strength and growth his vertue & knowledge is come to: and they all wisely and religiously accorded to that Counsell. Then said Master Parrillas, How shall wee probe him? Craton said, Let every one of us as he sleepest put under every corner of his bed an Olive-leaf, and then wee shall know if he perceived or felt any thing or not: This done, he awaking, greatly marvelled, & lifted up his eyes towards the roof of the Chamber fervently: The Masters, seeing that, said, wherefore lift you up your eyes so sharply? he answered, It is no marvel, for in my sleep I saw the uppermost part of the Chamber inclined towards the earth or else under me it was lifted up. The masters hearing this

## The seven wife

this, said among themselves, if this Child may live, he shall be a man of great cunning & fame.

How the Emperor by the counsell of the great Princes and Lords of his Empire, wedded another Wife.

**T**he Princes and great Lords of the Empire in the mean time came to the Emperoz & said, My Lord, ye have only but one Son, it is possible that hee might happen to dy, and therefore it were profitable that you would wed another wiffe, that thereby your ioyes & hopes might be blest wth farre moze certainty, and assured happynesse in your Race and issue, to the intent that the Empire of Rome be not left wthout an Heir. Whereupon yee are so mighty, that if it should happen you to get many Childzen, yee may promote and aduance them all to great Dignities & Lordships. Wherunto answered the Emperoz. Is it your Counsel that I shall take another Wife? Then seek me one that is gracious, a pure Virgin, fair, and gentle bozn, and then I shall follow your counsell and aduice. They went and sought and searched out many Kingdomes and Countreies and at the last they found the Kings Daughter of Castile, that was right fair and beautifull, and her they gave the emperoz to wiffe, who behabed her self so wel, that anon he was so greatly taken in her love, that he forgot all the heabynesse & sorrow of heart that he had taken for the death of his first Wife. And when they had liued long together  
without

## Masters.

without Childzen, and the Emperess saw well that she might not conceibe, then when she heard that the emperoz had a son with the seven wise Masters to be fostered and taught to the great good & profit of the Empire, she thought in her self and wished his death. And from that hour forth she imagined how she might conspire his destruction. It hapned on a night as the Emperoz lay in his bed, he said to the Emperess, My most deer & best beloved wife, I shall now shew & open to you the secrets of my heart: for under the sun is there no Creature that I love so well as you, and therefore trust in my love.

Then said the fair Emperess, if it be so as you say, I require of you one little boon or petition. Desire what you will, said the Emperoz: & all that to me is possible. I shall fulfill & give it to you. Then said the Emperess, my dear Lord you know I have no child by you yet conceived, for which I am sore pensive and heaby; But fame that never conceals it self long to true joy, hath delibered this happy truth to me, that ye have one son only, the which is set to the seven wise Masters to be taught and governed, & him hold I and repute for mine own Son: wherefore I beseech ye that ye will send for him, that I may see him and have consolation of his presence, as though he were mine own. Hereupon answered the Emperoz, It is sixteen years past since that I saw him; your will shall be fulfilled. Incontinent

## The seven wise

ment the Emperoz sent unto the seven wise Masters a letter sealed with his secret Sign, that upon pain of death they should bring his Son in the Feast of Pentecost following.

How the seven wise Masters after the sight of the Emperours Letters, would first observe the course and divine foreshowings of the Firmament and Planets, whether it were good to obey his Commandement or not.



**A**ND as the masters had read the letter, & had understood the will of the Emperoz in the night time they went & beheld the stars in the Firmament, whether it would be expedient to take their journey with the child after the Emperors will or not: And they saw clearly in the starres, that if they should lead the child in that time assigned, at the first word he should speak



## Masters.

speake, he should dye an evil death: Wherefore they were all right sorry: and as they beheld another Starre, they saw, that if they delibered not the child at the day aforesaid, they should lose their heads. Then said one of them, of two evils the least is to be chosen: it is better that all wee dye, than that the Child should lose his life: therefore that we may save the Childs life let us go to the Emperour. And as they were thus sorrowfull, the Child came down from his Chamber: and seeing his Masters so heapy, he demanded then the cause of their heavinesse, wherupon they answered, Sir, we have receibed your fathers letters, that upon pain of death now in this high feast of Pentecost we should lead you to your countrey, whereupon we have beholden the Firmament, wherein we clearly see and find, that if we within the time before prefixed present you to your Father, at the first word that ye shall pronounce out of your mouth ye shall be to the most vilest death condemned. Then said the Child, I must also behold the Firmament with the Stars, & so he did, & found cleer in a little Star, that if hee could abstain from speaking seven dayes, hee should bee preserved and save his life. And after he had seen this, he called the masters, & shewed them the Star, and said, Behold my deer Masters, I see perfectly in the Star, that if I abstain my self by the space of seven dayes, I shall save my

life.

## The seven wise

There are now seven masters the wisest of all the world; it is an easie thing for you, that ebery of you for me one day do answer, and with your wise answer ebery of you his day, my life may save and keep; & I in the eighth day shall speak of my self, and shall save my life, and all you from perill. As the masters had beholden that certain starre, they iudged with themselves that the Child had said troth, saying, Almighty God be thanked, that the wisdom and cunning of our Disciple exceedeth us all. Then said the first master Pantillas, lord I shall speak for you the first day, and save your life. And Lentulus the second master said, I shall for you the second day answer: and so consequently ebery of them promised to answer for himself his day. And this said, they cloathed the Child in purple, and leapt on horseback with a fair company, and hasted them with the child to the Emperoz.

How



## Masters.

How the Emperour rode to meet his Sonne comming  
from study with much joy, solemnitie and triumph.



**W**hen the Emperour perceibed that his  
Son was comming upon the way, he  
rode with great joy to meet him. The Masters  
understanding the comming of the Emperour,  
said unto the child, It is best that we depart, that  
in the meane while we may provide how we may  
save your life. The Child said, It pleaseth mee  
well that you do so, but have mind of me in time  
of my necessity: so they took leaue and departed  
towards the City, and the child came after, ac-  
companied most honourably. And as he and his  
Father the Emperour met, for ioy & gladnesse  
took his Son about the neck and kissed him, &  
said my dear Son, now is my ioy compleat, be-  
holding in thee the treasure of my lifes comfort.

## The seven wise

How is it with you? It is long since that I saw you. He bowed down his head and answered nothing: The Father had great wonder why that he spake not, & thought in himself that his Masters had informed him so, that hee riding should not speak. And when they were come in to the palace, & were descended from their horses, the Father took his Son by the hand, & led him into the hall, and set him next him, and beheld him, and said, Tell me now how it is with your Masters, how they have instructed you these many years past since I saw you? But hee inclined down his head and spake not: The father said, Wherefore speak yee not to mee? When the Emperesse heard that the Emperors Son was come, she was right joyous and glad, and said, I will go see him. She apparelled her self with rich attire, & took with her two of her Gentlewomen, and went there as the Emperor was sitting with his son, and sate her down by the child, & she said to the Emperor, Is this your Son that hath been nourished with the seven wise Masters? And hee said, It is my son, but he speaketh not: she said, deliver to me your Son, and if ever he speak I shall make him to speak. Then said the Emperor, Rise & go with her: The Son did reverence to his Father, as though hee said I am ready to accomplish your will, and so went with her.

Masters.

How the Empress led Dioclesian the Emperors Son with her into her Chamber for to make good cheer with him, the which he withstood.

**T**he Emperesse led him with her into her Chamber, and commanded all other to a-void, and set him by her afoze her bed side, and said O my best beloved Dioclesian, I have heard much of your person and beauty, but now I am glad that I may see that with mine eyes, which my heart coveteth and loveth: For I have caused your Father to send for you, that I might have solace and joy of your person. Wherefore right heartily I give you knowledge, that I for your love unto this day have kept my Virginitie; speak to mee therefore, and let us go to bed together: but he gave her no answer. She seeing that, said to him, O good Dioclesian, which hast the half of my Soul, why speak pee not to mee; or at the least shew mee some token of love? what shall I do? speak to mee: I am ready to fulfill and perform your will: and when she had thus said, she embraced him, and would have kissed his mouth; but he turned his visage from her, and in no wise would consent: then said mee again to him, O Son, wherefore do pee thus with mee? let us sleep together, and then shall pee well perceive, that for your love I have kept my Virginitie: but he turned his visage again from her. Shee seeing that of her he was ashamed, shewing unto him her na

## The seven wise.

ked Body & Brests, and said, behold my Son,  
what Body I habe, it is at your will, a servant  
and subject to your delight & pleasure: gibe mee  
your consent, or else it shall be hard for me to  
depart hence with my right mind. He neither  
shewed her any manner of love, but as much as  
he could, withdrew himself from her. When  
she saw that, she said, O my sweet Son, if it  
please you not to consent unto mee, yet speak,  
perhaps for some reasonable cause! So here is  
pen, inck, & paper, then write your will, whether  
I may at any time hereafter trust in your love  
or not. The Child wrote as hereafter follow-  
eth: O Lady, God forbid that I should defile  
my Fathers Orchard: for I wot not what  
fruit I should have of it: I know well one thing  
that I should sinne greatly in the sight of God,  
and also runne in the malediction of my father;  
& therefore from henceforth I pray you to pro-  
voke & stir me no more thereto. When she had  
seen and read the writing, she tare it with her  
teeth, and rent her cloathes to her navel, and  
all to scratched her visage, untill it was all  
bloody, & cast from her all the Ornaments of  
her head, & cried out with a loud voice. Come  
hither, my Lords, & help me, lest that this rude  
and evil body shame and rabish me,

How the Empress complained to the Emperour  
of the shame done unto her by his Son.

**T**he Emperour being in the Hall, and Hearing the noise and cry of the Empress, hee hastily ran toward his chamber, with many of his knights & other of his servants following him, to see what was the matter. Then began the Empress to cry and speak to the Emperour in this wise: O my Lord, have pittie & compassion upon me; behold, this young man is not your Sonne, but the foulest for ribaldry and actions of Luxury, that euer sinne and heat put strength into: for as you know well I led him and brought him with me into my chamber, & would have exhorted, and caused him to have spoken: I have done as much thereto as I care or may: and whilst I with my words exhorted and moved him to have spoken, hee hath endeavoured himself with me to have sinned; and because I would not with him consent, but withstood as much as I might to fly the same, hee hath made my visage all bloody, and hath all torn my besture and ornaments of my head, as you may openly see: & if you had not soon come unto my calling, he had ended in mee his most foul and wicked appetite. When the Emperour saw and heard this (filled with great malice and woodness) he commanded his servants that they would lead him to the gallows, and hang him. And when the Lords heard thereof, they



said, Lord you haue no more but this Son only  
it is not good that yee thus slightly put him to  
death: the Law is ordained for transgressors  
and misdoers. And if it be so that he must die,  
let him by the law die, lest it bee said, that the  
Emperour in his great fury and wrath (with-  
out law and justice) hath put his only Son to  
death. As the Emperour heard this, hee com-  
manded him to be put in prison, untill the time  
that judgement was giuen against him. And  
when the Empress understood that the Child  
was not put to death, she cryed and wept bitter-  
ly, and would take no rest; when the night was  
come, the Emperour entred into his Chamber,  
to go to bed, and found his wife weeping and  
sorrowing, to whom he said, O my dear Lady,  
for what cause are yee sorrowfull? She answer-  
ed, know you not how that your accursed  
Son hath done me so much shame, & so dishonou-  
red you that you haue commanded him to bee  
hanged, and yet he lieth, and your word is not  
performed, neither is my shame reuenged? To  
morrow, said the Emperour, hee shall die by the  
law, then said she, shall hee so long liue? then it  
might happen to you, as it did to a Burgess of  
Rome, of whom an example is mentioned: the  
Emperour said, I pray you shew me this example.  
That shall I do gladly, said the Empress.

## The first example of the Empresse.

**I**n the City of Rome was a Burgesse, the which had a fair Garden, wherein hee had standing a Noble Tree the which ebery year brought forth fruit of great vertue; for whosoever eate thereof that were sick of any manner of sicknesse or Leprosy: he should soon bee whole and receiue his sight.



It happened upon a day as the Burgesse went into his Garden to visit and see the Tree, he espied under the tree a fair young Imp, & called to him the Gardiner, and said: My Friend, of this young Imp I giue thee charge, for I trust of that to plant a better tree then this is: The Gardiner said, I shall it gladly do. Another time the Burgesse came again into his Garden



### The seven wise

To visit the young Plant, and it appeared unto him that it grew not so much as it should do: & he said to the Gardiner, How may this be? And he said, it is no wonder, for this great tree hath so great Armes and branches, that the Air may not come to the root of the young tree. The said the Burgesses, cut and hew off the Armes & the boughs, that the Air may come thereto. The Gardiner did as he was commanded. The Burgesses came again another time to see the young plant, & thought that it grew never the better, and said to the Gardiner, what is it that letteth this Plant to grow now? And then hee said, I suppose the height of the Old Tree letteth the Sun, that the rain may not come thereto, and therefore it cannot grow. Then said the Master unto him, hew down that Tree to the ground, for I hope of this Plant to have a better than euer that was. The Gardiner hearing his Master, obeyed him, and he hew down the Tree; & as soon as this was done, the young Plant all wholly perished, and came to nought, whereof came great harm; for when the poor and sick people perceived that the Tree was destroyed, they cursed all them that were Counsellors and helpers thereto, by the which they oftentimes were healed and cured of their infirmities and maladies. Then said the Emperess to her Lord, Understand ye what I have said? he answered, Yea, right well: then said she, I will declare to you the meaning of that which I have said. The

## The Declaration of the Example.

**T**his tree, my Lord, betokeneth your most noble Person, how that with your counsel and help many poore and sick folkes are greatly holpen & comforted: and the young Imp which is growen under the great tree, is your accursed Son, that now by cunning beginneth to grow, and studieth, first, how he may cut off the Arms and boughs of your might, and how to win to him the laud and labour of the people; yea and more unaturally, imagineth to destroy your person, that he may himself reign: but what shall then ensue thereof? All poore and feeble people shall curse them, who might have destroyed your Sonne, and have not done it: therefore I counsell you whilst you are in your power, and liking, that ye destroy him, lest that the curse of the people fall upon you. Then said the Emperour, We have giuen me good counsel: to morrow I shall condemn him to the vilest death that can be thought upon. ~~When~~ Then the day was come, the Emperour went and sat in Iudgement, and commanded his servants that they should lead his Son to be hanged, with Trumpets sounding in token of death. And as the Emperours Son was led through the City, the Common people began to weep and cry, Alas, the only Sonne of the Emperour is led towards his death; and therewithall came Pantillas the first

first master riding upon a horse. When the  
 Child saw him, he bowed his head to him, as  
 though he had said, Have mind upon me when  
 you come before my Father, for now I am led  
 towards the Gallows. Then the master  
 said to the servants, make no haste, for I hope  
 by the grace of God this day to deliver him from  
 death. Then said all the people, O good ma-  
 ster, haste you to the Palace, & save your Dis-  
 ciple. He smote the horse with his Spurs till  
 he came to the Palace, and kneeled to the Em-  
 perour and did him reverence, To whom the  
 Emperour said, It shall never be to thee good,  
 who answered, I have deserved a better reward  
 The Emperour said, there thou liest, for I deli-  
 bered him to thee in all things well mannered,  
 & now is he brought home dumb, & hath sought  
 to work his will to the shame of my virtuous  
 Emperesse, and to the dishonour of his Fathers  
 bed for ever; therefore this day he shall dye; and  
 ye shall all dye a shameful death, Then said the  
 master, Lord, forasmuch as your Sonne speak-  
 eth not, the cause thereof God knoweth, and  
 without cause it is not, as ye shall understand:  
 and where you say that he would have commit-  
 ted the sin of enforcement on your Emperesse, I  
 shall say to you of a truth, He hath been in our  
 company by the space of fifteen years; and we  
 never could perceive such abuse by him. And  
 therefore my dear Lord, I shall shew you one  
 thingt

thing, that if you put your Son to death for the  
words of your Wife, it shall happen to you  
worse than to a Knight: which killed his best  
Greyhound through the words of his Wife,  
which saved his Son from death, Then said the  
Emperour to the Master; Tell mee that Ex-  
ample. The Master said, Lord, that shall I not  
do, for before I shall make an end thereof, your  
Son might be dead, & then in vain and without  
hope should I rehearse it; but if it pleaseth you  
this Noble Example to hear, call again your  
Son till to morrow, and as you think by reason  
then do with him your pleasure. As the Empe-  
rour heard that, anon he willed the Child to be  
called again, and the mean time he set him in  
Prison while the Master finished his tale, and  
then he began in this manner following.

The Example of the first Master.

**T**here was a valiant Knight which had one  
only Son as you have, the which he loved  
so much, that hee ordained for his Keepers 3  
Nourishers. The first should give him suck &  
feed him. The second should wash him and keep  
him clean; & the third should bring him to his  
sleep and rest. This Knight had also a Grey-  
hound and a Faulcon, which he also loved right  
well. The Greyhound was so good, that he ne-  
ver run at any game but hee took it; and held it  
till his Master came. And if his Master dispo-  
sed him to go unto any battell, if hee should not  
speed

sped therein, anon as he should amount upon his horse, the Greyhound would take the horse tail in his mouth, and drave backward, and would also cry and howl marvellously loud. By these signs, and the due obseruation thereof, the Knight did alwayes understand that his Journey should haue very ill successe. The Falcon was so gentle and hardy, that he was neuer cast off to his prey but he took it.

The same knight had great pleasure in Justing and Tourney, so that upon a time under his Castle he proclaimed a Tournament, to the which came many great Lords & Knights. The Knight entred into the Tourney, and his Lady went with her maidens to see it: and as they went out, after went the Pourifiers, and left the Child lying alone there in the Cradle in the Hall, where the Greyhound lay neer the Wall, and the Hawk or Falcon standing upon a Perch. In this Hall there was a Serpent lurking, or hid in a hole, to all them of the Castle unknown, the which when hee perceived that they were all absent, hee put his head out of his hole, and when he saw none but the Child lying in the Cradle, hee went out of his hole towards the Cradle, for to haue slain the Child. The noble Falcon perceiving that, and he beholding the greyhound that was sleeping, made such a noise and rustling with her wings presently, that the Greyhound awoke  
and



### Masters.

and rose up; and when he saw the serpent nigh the Child, anon against him he leapt, and they both fought so long together, until that the serpent had grievously hurt & wounded the Greyhound, that he bled so sore, that the Earth about the Cradle was all bloody. The Greyhound, when that he felt himself grievously wounded and hurt, start fiercely upon the Serpent, and fought so sore together, and so eagerly, that between them the Cradle was obertost with the Child, the bottome upward.



And because that the Cradle had four pommels like feet, falling toward the earth, they saved the Childs life and his escape from any hurt. What can be more exprest to make good the wonder in the preservation of the child: incon-

sistently

### The seven wise

tenently hereafter, with great pain the Gzepe hound obercame and slew the serpent, and laid him down again in his place, and licked his wounds. And anon after as the Justis & Tourney was done, the Pourishers came first into the Castle, and as they saw the Cradle turned the upside down upon the Earth, compassed round about with blood; & that the Gzepehound was also bloody, they thought and said amongst themselves that the Gzepehound had slain the Child: and were not so wise as to turn up the Cradle again with the Child, for to have seen what was thereof befallen. But they said, Let us runne away, lest that our Master should put or lay the blame upon us, and so slay us. As they were thus running away, they met the Knights wife, & she said unto them, wherefore make ye this sorow, and whither will ye run? then said they, O Lady, wo and sorow bee to us, and to you, why said she, what is there hapned? shew mee, the Gzepehound, they said, that our Lord and Master loved so well, hath deboured and slain your Son, and lyeth by the wall all full of blood. As the Lady had heard this, she presently fell to the Earth, and beganne to weep and cry piteously, and said, Alas, O my dear Son, art ye thus slain and dead? what shall I now do, that I have mine only Son thus lost? Herewithall came in the Knight from the Journey, beholding his Lady thus crying &



## Masters.

making sorow, he demanded of her wherefore she made so great sorow and lamentation; she answered him, O my Lord, the Greyhound that you have lobed so much hath slain your onely Son, & lieth by the wall satiated with the blood of the child: The Knight being exceeding angry went into the hall, and the greyhound went to meet him, and did fawn upon him as he was wont to do, and the Knight drew out his sword, and with one stroke smote off the Greyhounds head; and then he went to the cradle where the child lay, and found his Son all whole, & by the Cradle the Serpent slain; and then by divers signes, he perceived that the greyhound had killed the serpent for the defence of the Child. Then with great sorow and weeping hee cate his Hair, and said, woe bee to mee, that for the words of my wife, I have slain my good and best greyhound the which hath saved my childs life, and hath slain the serpent: therefore I will put my self to penance: and so hee brake his Sword in three pieces, and went towards the holy Land, and abode there all the daies of his life. Then said the Master to the Emperour, Lord understand yee what I have said: and he answered and said, Right well. The Master said, If you do put your Son to death for the words of your wife, it shall happen to you worse than it did to the Knight for his Greyhound. The Emperour said, Ye have shewed me a fair  
exam:

## The seven wise

example, and without doubt this day my Son shall not dye. Then said the Master, if you do so, ye do wisely, and I thank you that ye have not spared him this day for my sake.

The second complaint of the Emperesse. A sorrow mingled with much cunning & falshood.

**W**hen the Emperesse heard that the child was yet not dead, she began to weep bitterly, & late her down on the earth in ashes, & would not lift up her head; when the Emperoz heard that, he entred into the Chamber and said unto her, O good wife, wherefore make you all this sorrow, and trouble your self so much? She said, Ask ye that of me? know you not well, what great dispite and shame I have suffered of your unhappy Son, & how ye have promised me that you would see justice to be therefore executed on him, & yet he lieth: of a troth it will happen to you, as it happened to a Shepherd & a Boze. The Emperoz said, I pray you shew me that example for my learning: she said, As yesterday I shewed you one, and saw no good effect that came thereof, to what end should I now do the like? Nevertheless I shall declare this noble example unto you, as hereafter you shall hear.

The second Example of the Emperesse.

**T**here was sometime an emperoz the which had a great Forrest wherein was a wild Boze, which was so cruel & so fierce; that he killed

## Masters.

led and deuoured men going thorow the For-  
rest. The Emperoz therefore being right hea-  
prouclained throughtout all his dominions, that  
whatsoever hee was that could slay the Boze,  
should haue his only Daughter to Wife, and  
therewith his Empire after his death: and as  
this was in places pzoclained, there was  
not one man found that durst gibe this adben-  
ture: But there was a Shepherd, who thought  
in himself, Might I the Boze overcome and  
slay, I should not only aduance my selfe, but  
also my Generation and kindred. So then hee  
took his Shepherds Staff in his hand, and went  
to the Forrest, And as the Boze had of him a  
sight, he drey towards the Herdsman, but he  
for fear climbed upon a Tree, and then the  
Boze began to bite and gnaw the Tree.



### The seven wise

So the Herd thought shortly that he would have oberyowen it. This Tree was loaden with great plenty of fruit, and the Herd gathered and plucked thereof & cast them to the Boze, inso much that when he was filled therewith, he laid him down to sleep: the which when the Herd perceived, by little & little descended the Tree, and with the one hand he clawed the Boze, and with the other held him upon the tree, and seeing that the Boze slept very soundly, he drew out his knife and smote the Boze to the heart and killed him: And so shortly after he wedded the Emperors daughter: and after the death of her father, he was made Emperer. Then said she, My Lord, wote ye not what I have said? he said, Right well: Then said she, this mighty Boze betokeneth your most noble Person, against whom may no man withstand, neither by wisdom nor with strength. This Shepherd with his Staff, is the Person of your ungracious Son, who with his Staff of cunning, beginneth to play with you, as the Herdsman claweth the Boze, & made him to sleep and after killed him. In the same manner the Masters of your Son, by their false fables & narrations claw you, and close with you untill the time that your Son slay you, that hee may reign. Then said the Emperour, God forbid that they should do to me as they did to the wild Boze; and said unto her, This day my Sonne shall

## Masters.

shall dye: and she answered, if you do so, then  
do yee wisely. When the Emperour the Se-  
cond time sitting in Judgement, commanded to  
lead him to the place of Execution appointed  
for that purpose: and whilst he was going, the  
second Master came before the Emperour, doing  
him great reberence, as before is shewed in the  
comming of the first Master, to whom the se-  
cond Master said, O my Lord and Emperour,  
if you should slay your Sonne for the words of  
your Wife, it shall happen worse to you, than it  
did to a certain Knight, which for the words of  
his Wife, was unjustly put upon the Pillory.  
The Emperour said, O good Master tell mee  
how that hapned, and he said, My Lord, I shall  
not say it, unlesse you will call your only Son  
from the death untill the time that the example  
be told, the which if it turn not you from your  
purpose, then your will bee fulfilled. When the  
Emperour commanded that the Child should  
be called again; and under this manner that  
followeth, the second Master began to tell.

### The Example of the second Master.

**I**n a City was an ancient Knight which wed-  
ded a young wife, & fair, as ye have don, whom  
he loved above all earthly things: this Knight  
was a very circumspect & carefull husband, in-  
somuch that every night hee locked in the doore  
with his own hands, and laid the keyes under



## The seven wise

his Beds head. In that city there was a law o  
Custom, that at a certain hour in the night  
a Bell was used to be rung, that after the ring-  
ing of the said Bell, if any man or woman were  
by the watch-men found about the streets, all  
that night they should be kept fast in Prison, &  
on the morrow set fast upon a Pillory, that all  
the people might behold and wonder at them.

This foresaid Knight had little mind or lust  
of fleshy deeds, for that he was very old, and  
might not satiate or perform the desires and  
appetites of his young Wife, wherefore eve-  
ry night she having a Paramour, her Husband  
sleeping, took the keyes from under his Beds  
head, and went to her Lobe & when she came a-  
gain, all possibly she laid the keyes under her hus-  
bands head; and thus shee played many a time.

So it happened upon a night that the Knight  
awaked out from his sleep, and missed his  
Wife, and also the Keyes under his Beds head,  
Whereupon he then rose up, and went unto the  
doors, and found them open, the which he clo-  
sed and bolted fast within, and then went up  
again into his Chamber. and looked out at the  
window towards the Street: and when it was  
nearer about the third Cocks crow, his Wife  
came from her best beloved. and found the  
door shut and bolted within? then was she sor-  
rowfull; nevertheless she knocked to have come  
in. Then spake the Knight out of the window,

## Masters.

O thou most wicked and unclean Wife, now I  
 know and am expert that many times thou hast  
 forsaken my Bed, & gone & done adultery; now  
 thou shalt stand untill the Bell be rung, & that  
 the Watch-men may take thee & do with thee  
 according to the Law. His Wife answered, My  
 Lord, why do ye say that to me? for in very troth  
 the cause of my being abroad was for no ill, but  
 I was called by my Mothers maid, and fetched  
 in the night, & when I saw you sleep so sweetly,  
 I durst not awake you, because that ye are old,  
 and therefore I took the keyes and went to my  
 Mother, the which is sore sick, that I fear to  
 morrow she must bee anointed or annihilated:  
 notwithstanding, for because that I would not  
 you offend, I have hastened mee again unto you,  
 and have left her lying in great pain and infir-  
 mity, therefore I pray you, for the love of God,  
 let mee in before the Bell ringeth. The Knight  
 answered, ye shall not so come in, ye must there  
 abide untill the time that the Bell ringeth, and  
 untill that the Watch-men come and take you:  
 then said she, That shoulde bee to you and to me,  
 and unto all our Friends and kindred, a great  
 shame and rebuke, therefore for the reberence  
 of Almighty God let me come in: then said he,  
 Have in thy mind, chyll and false Wife, how of-  
 tentimes thou hast forsaken my Bed, and done  
 Adultery: it is much better that thou suffer  
 Shame, and bewail for thy finnes here in this

### The seven wise

Worlde, than for to suffer pain in Hell. Shee  
said again to him, I pray you for the love of  
him that was crucified and died on the Crosse,  
have mercy on me: The Knight said, Thou  
labourest in vaine, for thou shalt not come in,  
but thou shalt tarry the comming of the watch-  
men. She hearing that, said, My Lord, ye know  
that by this doore standeth a Well; if you let mee  
not come in, I shall therein drowne my self, ra-  
ther than all my friends should be ashamed for  
me: then said he, would to God that thou hadst  
been drowned long before that euer thou camest  
in my Bed. As they thus spake together, the  
Moon went down, and all was very dark: then  
said she, if it will not otherwise be, I shall drowne  
my self: but yet before, like a true Christian  
Woman, I will make my Testament. First,  
I bequeath to God my soul, and my body to be  
buried in the Church of Saint Peter: and of  
all other things and goods that God hath sent  
me, I giue unto you to dispose for my soul, af-  
ter your wisdome and Discretion. And when  
she had thus said, she went unto the Well, and  
there lying a great stone, with both her Arms  
she lift it up, and said, Now I drowne my self,  
and so cast she

Stone



Stone down into the Well, and went again  
 Prybly and stood by the dooz: The Knight hear-  
 ing the noise, cried with a loud voice, saying,  
 Alas, alas, my sweet Wife is drowned, and so  
 he hastily came down, and ran to the Well;  
 and when he saw that the dooz was open, pre-  
 sently she entred in and locked the dooz, and  
 went up into the Chamber, and lay, and looked  
 out of the Window. The Knight stood by the  
 Well, and cryed and wept bitterly, and said,  
 woe be to mee, I have now lost my best beloved  
 Wife: now cursed be the time that I made fast  
 the dooz against her: when the Lady heard that,  
 she said, O thou cursed old Gyeftard, why  
 standest thou there at this time of the night?  
 was not my body to you sufficient? Therefore

### The seven wife

do you thus go ebery night to your harlots,  
and your Whores, and leabe my Bed? As he  
heard the boice of his wife, he was right glad,  
and said, Blessed bee God that yet thee is not  
drowned: But, my good Lady, wherefore do  
you lay such things against mee? I thought to  
have chastised you, and therefore I locked fast  
the doo; but in no wise I intended it to your  
peril: ye know well what sorow I made for  
you, when I heard you to have fallen into the  
Well, and therefore I came thinking to have  
helped you. Whereupon she said, Thou lyest  
falsely, I never committed such faults as thou  
layest to mee; but it appeareth by a common  
Proverb, Hee that is guilty or culpable him-  
self in a sin, hee judgeth ebery man to be in  
the same; or else, The Father never sought his  
Son in the Oven, except he had been therein  
himself? In like case conceibest thou a false  
surmise of me; but one thing I promise thee,  
thou shalt abide there untill the Watch-men do  
come, and the Bell be rung, that they may lead  
thee before the Judges, to abide and suffer the  
Law. Then said the Knight, Wherefore lay ye  
such things to mee, that am old, impotent, and  
most unmeet to delight in such a game? I have  
dwelt long in this City, and never was defa-  
med, and therefore let me in, that to me or to  
your self, ye do no shame. She said, Pee say  
in vain, It is better that pee forthink your  
sins



### Masters.

sins in this world, then in Hell: have no mind what the Wiseman saith, A Poor man Proud, a rich man a Lper, and an Old man a Fool, God hateth: so be you a Fool and rich. What need was it for you to slander me? and cannot be content when as yee have the flower of my youth at your pleasure, but yet runnest to Harlots, and therefore it is the great grace of God that you have time and space to forgethink it, lest yee should perishe and be damned for more sinns, and therefore suffer your penance patiently. The Knight said, O my best beloved Lady, although it be so, yet is God mercifull, and he asketh nothing of a Sinner, but that he amend his life, and forgethink himself, and do penance for his sinns. Now let me come in, & I will make amends, She said, what Devil hath made you so good a Preacher? but so you come not in. And as they thus spake, the Bell rung, and then he intreated very fervently, saying, Now suffer me to come in, that I be not ashamed for ever: She answered, The ringing of the Bell doth pretend the health of your Soul. And as this was said, then presently came the Watch-men about the City, and found the Knight standing in the street and said to him, O good man, it is not good that ye stand here, in this hour of the night. As she heard the voice of the Watch men, she said, Goodfellows, abenge me on that old accursed Whore.

### The seven wise

Whore-hunter, for ye know whose daughter I am : This cursed old man is wont ebery night to leabe my bed, and go to his Whores & Harlots. I habe long tyme forborn him, and would not tellye it, nor complain on him to my friends for I trusted that he would habe amended his misrule, and it helpeth not : And therefore take him, & punish him after the Law, that all such old doters may take example by him. Then the Watch-men took him and all night chastised him in prison, and on the morrow they put him on the Pillory. Now saith the Master to the Emperour, Lords, habe you understood what I habe said : & he said, right well. Then said the Master, if you put to death your son by the instigation of your Wife, it shall chance unto you worse than to the Knight.

The Emperour said, he was the worst Whoremonger man that eber I heard of, that so fallie brought her Husband to shame and rebuke : I say unto you, Master, That for the reason of this example, my Son shall not dye this day. The Master said unto him, if you do so, then you do wisely, and that hereafter you shall joy : so I commit you to God, and thank you for your patient hearing, and for the sparing of your Son; and so he departed.

### Masters.

The third complaint of the Empress, more full of cunning and dissembling sorrow than the former.

**W**hen the Empress heard that the Child was not dead, she wept bitterly, and entered into her priby Chamber, and tare her skin with her nails, and with a loud voice cryed, Alas that eber I was born, that I so great a kings Daughter, should be thus intreated & shamed, And therefore can have no remedy. Her Gentlewoman hearing this, went and shewed it to the Emperoz, and hee went unto her, and comforted her, saying, O Lady weep not so, ne cry not, for it becometh you not. ~~Who~~ answered, the love that I have and owe unto you, maketh me more sorrow, than the contempt of the death: for why? the inward love of your heart, hath hitherto prohibited, and leited me, that I have not returned again unto my Country, to my Father: but I fear, should I so do, it might turn to your harm, for hee is mighty to honour me with his riches, and so rebenge my quarrell and despite in such wise that yee might repent it. ~~Whereto~~ said the Emperour, let that pass out of your mind, neither, repeat it any more, for as long as I live, I shall neber fail you, And she said, Lord, I pray God that you may long live: but I fear me that it shall happen to you, as it befell to a knight and his Sonne that would not bury his

### The seven wise

His Fathers head in the Church-yard, and yet  
his father slain for him. Then said the Empe-  
rour, shew mee the Example how it was that  
he would not bury his Fathers head. She said  
I shall do it for your profit.

### The third Example of the Emperour.

**I**n the City of Rome there was a Knight  
which had two daughters & one son. And this  
Knight had so great delight in hunting, jousting,  
and Tourney, that all things that he might  
winne and get, he laid and spent it thereupon.  
In that time lived an Emperour named Ota-  
vian, which in his riches of Gold and silver ex-  
ceeded all other Kings and Princes, insomuch  
that he had a Tower full of Gold, and ordained  
a Knight to have the keeping and charge there-  
of. This Knight that so haunted Jousting, and  
other idle Games came to so great poverty, that  
he was forced, out of the extremity of his ad-  
verse Fortunes, to sell his Heritage, and called  
to him his Sonne, and said, My Sonne, it be-  
hoobeth me of your counsell, for necessity and  
poverty compelleth mee to sell mine Heritage,  
or else to find some other way whereby I may  
live: for if I should sell mine Heritage, both you  
and your Sisters should perish. Then the Son  
said, Father, If ye can find any manner of  
means without selling of your Heritage. I  
should be ready to help you. The Father said,

## Masters.

I haue thought on a good counsell: The Emperour hath a great Tower full of Gold, by night time let us together with Instruments, dig and be to thozow the Tower, and let us take of the Gold as much as shall suffice us. Whereunto the Son answered, and said, That counsell cannot be amended, for it is better of the Emperours Gold to take, (to help us) then to sell our Heritage.



So they rose up both in the night, and went to the Tower, & with Instruments they made a hole thozow the wall, and took as much gold as they could both carry away at that time and the Knight payed his debts, and haunted again Iusts, as hee did before, untill all was spent and consumed. In the mean while the



### The seven wise

the Keeper of the treasure went into the Tower, and when hee saw the Treasure stolen, and a great hole made throught the Wall, he began to waxe soze afraid, and went unto the Emperour, and shewed how it was befallen. To whom the Emperour said all angry, What needest thou to shew that? have I not delibered to thee my Treasure, & therefore of thee I will ask it? Anon as the Keeper heard that, he went to the Tower again. and set befoze the hole a great Messell full of Pitch melted, with other gins of subtilty, that no man might come in at that hole, but hee must needs fall into that Messell; and if hee had therein fell, he could no more come out of it. Not long after, the Knight had all the gold consumed and spent, and went again with the Sonne to the Tower, to steal more Gold. And as the Father went in first, anon hee was fallen into the Messell full of Pitch to the neck, and when hee saw that hee was taken, and could not get out, he said to his Sonne, follow mee not, for if thou doest, thou canst not escape by any means. Then said the Sonne, God defend that I should not help you: For if you are found, we are all but dead; & if that you may not be holpen by me, I shall seek counsell how that you may bee delibered and holpen. The Father said, there is none other Counsell, but with thy sword smite off my head, and as my Body is found without an head,

head, no man shall know mee, and so thou and my Daughters may escape & aboid this worldly shame and death. The Son said, Father, ye have giuen the best counsell; For if it were so that any man might perceibe any knowledge of you, none of us all shall escape the death, and it is expedient that your head be smitten off: anon he drew out his sword, and smote off his Fathers head, and cast it into a pit, and then went and shewed unto the Sisters all the matter, who many dayes after pily bewailed the death of their Father. After this the Keeper of the Treasure came into the Tower, and found a body without a head; whereat he wondred sore and shewed it to the Emperour; to whom he said, Bind that Body at the tail of an Horse, and so draw it thorow all the Streets of the City, and diligently take good heed if ye hear any cry, or wailing: Wheresoever ye hear that, he is the Lord of the House; take all them, and the Body, draw them to the Gallies and hang them. The which the Emperours servants fulfilled according to his commandement: and as they came against the House of the dead Knight, the Daughters seeing the body of their dead father, made a marvailous great shriek, and wept pitiously; and as their Brother heard that: anon hee wounded himself with a knife, so that great plenty of blood came out of the wound. The Officers

### The seven wise.

pers when they heard the cry, entred into the house, demanding the cause of their clamour. Then answered the Son, they lament because I am thus wounded : For when my sisters saw my blood so abundantly to go out as you see, they began to weep and cry: and when the Officers saw the wound, they beleebd his words; and so deceived went their wapes & hung the Knights body upon the Gallows, where he hung a long time, and his Son would neither take his body down from the Gallows, nor yet bury his head. The Emperesse said, understand ye what I have said: the Emperoz said, Right well.

### The declaration of the Example.

**T**hen spake the Emperess thus : My Lord, I fear it will so chance to you & to your son, this Knight for the love of his Son was made poore, and first he committed theft and brake the Tower : Secondly, caused himself to bee beheaded, that his Chilozen should have no shame. After, the Son cast his head into the Dike, and buried it not, neither in Church nor Churchyard; and his body bee suffered to hang still upon the Gallows : If that he could not have taken it down in the day, hee might well have done it in the night. In the same manner ye labour night and day, that yee may promote your Son to honour and riches, but without doubt hee labourereth for your confussion and destruction,

## Masters.

on, that he may raigñ after you in your Em-  
pire. Therefore I advise you, that you speedily  
take away his Life: who living, should sud-  
denly prove the destruction of yours. The Em-  
perre said, you have shewed me a good example.  
The Knights Sonne when he had smitten off  
his Fathers head, would not bury it: without  
doubt my Sonne shall not do so to me; but hee  
anon commanded his Officers that they should  
lead him to the Gallows, and they all obeyed  
his Commandement hastily: As they led him  
through the Streets, the People made a great  
Roise and Lamentation, crying, Alas, alas, the  
only Sonne of the Emperour is led again to-  
ward the Gallows: and as they led him, the  
Third Master named Craton, came riding  
upon an Horse, and as the Child saw him, he did  
bow down his head to him, as though hee had  
said, Have mind upon me, The People cried,  
saying, O good Master, hast you, and save your  
Disciple; and so he smote his Horse with his  
Spurres, and hasted him to the Palace. And  
when he came before the Emperour, he honoura-  
bly saluted him. Who said, Thy coming hither  
shall nothing avail thee, for I think it long  
untill I be revenged on thee. The Master said,  
I hoped at my coming to have been welcome,  
& to have had a better reward, and not so to be  
rebuked. The Emperour said, As ye have de-  
served, so it shall be to you. To whom he said,

### The seven wise

My Lord, what have I deserbed? The Emperour said, yee right well deserbe death, for I delibered you my Sonne well speaking, and well mannered, for to be informed and taught: & ye have delibered him again unto me dumb. and a Kibauld? To whom the Master said, In that you say hee is dumb that I commit to God: For he maketh the dumb to speak, and deaf to hear. But in that you say he would have inforced your Wife, that would I gladly know, if any Creature habe seen that, for there is no malice abobe the malice of a woman, and that I shall probe by a good Example: that a Woman is full of falshood and unknowen be-cets; and if you put to death your Sonne for the words of your Wife, it shall happen unto you, as it did to a noble-man, of his Wife and his Pie, the which he lobed marbilously: To whom the Emperour said, I pray you tell me, how that Women are full of malice & leasings. who said, I will not shew it, but if you will first call again your Son from death, then at your pleasure I shall shew the Example. Then the Emperour anon made his Son to be called again and to be put in Prison. Then the Master began to tell the Example in this manner and form following.

The Example of the third Master,

**T**here was in a City a rich Burghers that had a Pie, the which he lobed so well, that ebery



# Masters.

every day he taught her to speak Latine & Hebrew: and when she had learned her perfectly to speak those two Languages, all that she saw and heard, she shewed and told her Master.



This young man had a fair young Wife, as ye have, the which he loved full well: but she on the contrary loved him not, because he was not of that lascivious reformation, for to answer her lusts according to the height of her desires: and therefore she had another fair young man, that she loved above her Husband: and alwayes as her Husband was out of the Town, about his Merchandise and other businesse, she sent for her best beloved, that they might make good cheer together. The Wife as she espied that, told it to her Master at his coming home,

### The seven wise

in such a manner, as the noise thereof ran all o-  
ber the City of her adultery, wherefore her hus-  
band many times bzaled and chid with her,  
she answered him, Ye beleebe your cursed Pie,  
whiche as long as she lieth shall alwaies make  
betwixt us variance & discord: and he said, that  
Pie cannot lye, for what she seeth and heareth,  
that shee telleth mee, and therefore I beleete  
her more than you. It fortuneth that this man  
went into a farre Country about his Merchan-  
dise, and as soon as hee was gone, his Wife  
sent for her Friend and Love, to solace & make  
good cheer with him: but he durst not come by  
Day light, but abode untill the evening, lest  
that he should be marked and seen of the people:  
and when the night was come, then he knocked  
at the Gate, and she was ready and opened it:  
Hee said, I fear that the cursed Pie shall  
accuse us: for by her is come great Slander  
upon us through all the City: Enter in, shee  
said, boldly, and fear not: and they should  
pass thorow the Hall, where the Pie was in  
her Cage, she heard him say these words, O my  
most beloved, I fear mee greatly lest that the  
Pie should betray us. And as the Wife heard  
that, she said, Be still, Fool, it is dark, she may  
not see you. Then the Pie hearing that, said,  
If I see thee not, I hear thy voice, and thou  
doest woyng to my Master, for thou sleepest with

## Masters.

my Mistresse; and when my Master cometh,  
 I shall tell him. The young man hearing that,  
 said, told I not you, that the Pie would disco-  
 ver us? And the Wife said, fear not, for this  
 Night wee will be abenged on the Pie: and so  
 they entred into the Chamber, and slept toge-  
 ther that night. About midnight the Wife a-  
 rose and called her Maid, and said, Fetch me a  
 Ladder, and set it up to the Roof of the House,  
 that I may rebenge me on the Pie. The Maid  
 did eben so, and so they went up both, and made  
 a hole thozow the cowering of the House, right  
 ober the Pie, and there-thozow cast sand, clay,  
 stones, and water upon the Pie, insomuch that  
 the poor Pie was almost dead: and on the mor-  
 row the young man went out early at the back  
 doo. And when the good man was come home,  
 as his custome was, hee went and kissed the  
 Pie, and said to her, O Pie, my beloved Bird,  
 tell mee how thou hast fared the whiles that I  
 habe been out? She said, Master, I shall tell  
 you tidings that I habe heard: Your Wife, as  
 soon as you were gone, by the Night time she  
 let a man come in. And as soon as I heard that,  
 I told him that I would shew it to you, at your  
 comming home, yet notwithstanding shee led  
 him into your Chamber, and slept with him  
 all night: you aske me also how that I habe  
 done in your absence, and I say to you of a  
 troth, that I never was so nigh my death, as I

### The seven wife

was that same night, with Snow, Hail, and  
Rain, that fell upon mee so long together, that  
I was almost left for dead. The Wife when  
she heard that, said to her Husband: Sir, you  
beleebe your Wife, now you may hear what she  
saith: She complaineth that in the same Night  
there fell so much Snow, Hail and Rain, upon  
her, that shee was almost dead: and yet there  
was none of all them that same night, for there  
was not in the year a fairer nor clearer night  
than it was: and therefore from henceforth be-  
leebe her not. Then went the good man to his  
Neighbours, and asked of them, If that night  
were any Tempest or Rain: They answered.  
That some of them walked that Night, and in  
all that year they had not seen a fairer Night:  
then went he to his house, and said to his Wife,  
I have found you in a truth, for the Night was  
very fair and clear, as I understand of your  
Neighbours. You may now know of a truth,  
said she, that the Wife is a lyer, with her leasings  
shee hath sown and made much discoz) betwixt  
us: and moreover, I am defamed through the  
City by her false leasings. Then the Burgess  
went unto the Wife, & said, wherefore hast thou  
made lyes and false tales betwixt mee and my  
Wife? is this the thanks that I have for the  
Meat that I was wont to give thee with my  
own hands every day? & thou hast also thereby  
brought my Wife into great defamation & dis-  
grace

## Masters

grace througħ all the Town. The Pie answered. God knoweth I cannot ly, for that which I saw and heard have I shewed unto you. Then said he, thou liest, hast thou said unto me that in the same night was Hail & Snow, & Rain, that thou hadst neer hand lost thy life, which is most false? And therefore from henceforth thou shalt make no more leasings nor discord betwixt mee and my Wife, and so took the Pie and brake her neck.

When as the Wife saw that, she was glad, and said Now have you done well, now may wee all our daies live in rest and Peace. And when hee had slain the Pie, hee looked up and saw in the top of the house, a Ladder, and a besseil with water, sand, and stones; and when he beheld that he perceived the falshood of his wife and cryed with a loud voice, Who be to me, that for my Wives words I have slain my Pie, and also my solace and joy lost, the which in all things said to mee truth. And as hee had thus done, anon for sorow he left his Merchandize and all his House, and went towards the Holy Land, and never turned again towards his Wife. Then the Master said to the Emperour, Sir, have you understood what I said? he answered Right well. The Master said, was not that a false and cursed Wife, that so by her falshood, deceit, and cunning, caused the Pie to be slain? The Emperour said, In troth shee was,



### The seven wise

was full of falsenesse: it pitieth me greatly to think upon the Queene, the which for her true saying lost her life. Merily I say unto you, that you have told mee a very fair Example: therefore this day my Sonne shall not dye. Then said the Master, Sir, you do wisely, & I thank you that you have spared your Son this day for my sake, and so to God I commend you.

### The fourth complaint of the Emperesse.

**W**hen the Emperesse heard that the Child was not dead, she made a great noise & crying, in such wise, that she was heard throughout the Palace, & said, Who be unto me that ever I was made Emperesse; would God that I had died, when I was first brought into these parts. When the Emperour heard the voice and cry that shee made, hee entred into the Chamber, and comforted her as much as hee could, and demanded the cause of her lamentation. Who said, O mine own Lord, have you no wonder though that I be in this sorrow and agony, for I am your Wife, and in your company by your Sonne I am ashamed, and ye saw lately the bloody marks of his inforcement upon my tender flesh, and you have promised me that he therefore should be hanged, and yet he lieth: wherefore should I not be sorry? The Emperour answered, Be content and pleased, and I shall do Justice upon my Sonne to morrow: but that I forbare him Yesterday, was at the moving

## Masters.

mobing of one of his Masters by an Example. Then said she, haue you forbid to do iustice for one word? were it so. yet for a word ye should not let to do iustice; and ye say, for the Example of one Master, ye haue left it. I fear mee it shall happen to you, and with your Masters, as upon a time it fortuned unto an Emperour with his Seuen Wise Masters: The Emperour said, I pray you tell mee that Example: She said, To what intent should I labour in vain? For yester day I shewed you a good example, and it abailed not: & whatsoeuer I shew for your honour and profit, that the Masters of your Sonne turn up and down to your destruction, as in this present example I shall clearly shew unto you; To whom the Emperour said, O my best beloved Lady, tell me that example, that by the same I may the better beware: for though through my clemency I gave one daies benefit of life to my Son, I shall not therefore giue him his life, for that which is deferred, is not therefore forgiven; and she said, Gladly shall I shew it to you to your profit, and began to tell as it hereafter followeth.

The fourth Example of the Emperess.

**S**ometime there was in the City of Rome seuen wise Masters, by whom all the Empire was goberned & ruled, & the Emperour that then was, did neuer attempt any thing without the Counsell of the Masters: whereupon they  
(percei-

## The seven wise

(perceiving that the Emperour was so affected and inclined to them, that without them hee would not ordain or do any thing; devised by their Art and cunning, that the Emperour should clearly see as long as he was in the Palace, but as soon as he was out of the Palace, he should become blind: and that did they, to the intent that they might the more freely have the dealing themselves of all things, that appertained to the Emperour: by the which they got and won to them great profit and lucre of goods; and after they had made and wrought the Experiment, they could never change it, nor undoe it afterward, but the Emperour abode still blind many years: And the Seven Masters made and proclaimed throughout the Empire, that if any man had dreamed a dream, he should come unto them with a Florent of Gold or Silber, and they would expound and declare unto him the interpretation of his Dream: whereby, & by other unjust means, they obtained much more Substance and Money of the People, then the Emperour did. So upon a time when he sat at the Table with the Emperesse, hee began to sigh and sorrow in himself: and when shee perceived that, shee inquired diligently of him the cause of his heavinesse and dolour: The Emperour said, Should it not be heavy and sorrowfull unto mee, that I so long have been blind, and cannot see out of my Palace

### Malters.

face, and yet haue and finde no remedie? To  
whom spake the Emperesse, and said, Lord  
hear my Counsell, and it shall neuer repent  
you, if you do therfore. In your Court you  
haue Seven Wise Masters, by whom wee and  
all the Empire is goberned, if you now behold  
and mark this in your mind, wee shall finde  
that they are the cause of your blindnesse, and  
disease: and if it be so, they are worthe to dye  
a most shamefull death: therfore take, heere,  
my Counsell and aduise: first send for them, &  
shew to them your disease and infirmity, and  
threaten them on paine of their Lives, that they  
should finde some speedy remedie to help you of  
your sickness and blindnesse. This Counsell  
pleased the Emperour well. And anon he sent  
for the Masters, and when they were come,  
the Emperour anon shewed unto them his infir-  
mity and blindnesse, and charged them on  
paine of death, that they should presently seek  
some remedie to ease him thereof. Then answered  
they, we desire of us a thing that is difficult  
and hard to be done thus shortly, but giue us  
respite for ten daies, and then wee will giue  
you your full answer. The Emperour was  
therewithall well contented and pleased: Then  
the Seven Wise Masters went to Counsell,  
how they may restore unto him his sight a-  
gain, and in no manner of wise could they finde  
the means how to put away the blindness from  
the

### The seven wise

he Emperour, wherefoze they were all right  
sorrowfull, and said among themselves, with-  
out we finde a remedy, we are all but dead men.  
So they went from thence throughout all the  
Empire, and sought if they could finde any re-  
medy or Counsell therfore. It happened them  
upon a time going through the City, and in the  
midst thereof, they found Children playing:  
And after them came a man with a Talent of  
Florent of Gold, and said to them, Good Ma-  
sters, this Night have I dreamed a dream, the  
Interpretation whereof I would faine know:  
wherefoze I pray you shew mee what it signi-  
fieth, and take this Gold to you. That heard  
one of the Children that played among the o-  
ther, who said unto him, give mee the Gold, and  
then I shall expound the Dream. The Man  
said, I dreamed this night that in the midst  
of my Orchard was a great Spring of water,  
whereof came many small Springs, that all  
mine Orchard was full, and overflowen with  
Water: The Child said, take a Spade and dig  
in the same place whereas you thought that the  
Water sprang out, and there shall yee finde a  
Hord of Gold, so great, that you and all your  
Children and Lineage shall bee for ever rich:  
The Man did as the child had shewed him, and  
found the Treasure according to his Words.  
Then went the Man to the Child, and meted  
him a Pound weight of the Gold that hee had  
found



Masters.

found, for the Interpretation of the Dream; but he would receive none, but committed him to the Prayers of the Man. The Seven Wise Masters, when they heard the Child so wisely expounded the Dream, they said to him, Good Child what is your Name? He answered and said, I am called Merlin. Then said the Masters, We see surely great wisdom in you, we shall shew unto you a strange matter, and of that wee would gladly that yee could find a remedy. The Child said, Shew unto me your matter: and they said, The Emperour of Rome as long as he is in the Palace, he hath his sight very clear without any Impediment, but as soon as he is gone out of the Palace, hee is so blind that hee cannot see. Now if you can find out the cause thereof, and give present remedy whereby hee may be eased and have his sight again, ye shall have a great reward and honour of the Emperour. Then answered the Child, I know as well the cause of the blindness, as the remedy. Then said all unto him, Come with us to the Emperour, and yee shall be rewarded so largely, that yee shall be pleased. To whom the Child said, I am ready to go with you. And when they came with the Child before the Emperour, they said unto him, Lord, is here is the Child that wee have brought before you, the which shall fullfill your desire touching the cause of your blindness, and the recovering of  
your.

### The seven wise

your sight, the Emperoz said, Good masters will you take it upon you, and abide therby, that the Child shall perfozm this attempt? then all said, Yea: for we are expert in his wisdom. The Emperoz turned himself towards the Child. & said, Will you undertake to sell mee the cause of my blindness, and the remedie? the Child answered and said, My Lord the Emperoz. lead me into your Bed-chamber, and there I shall shew you what is to be done: & as he was therein brought he said to his servants take off the cloaths off the bed. and all the apparrell, & ye shall see wonders. And as that was done, they saw a Well smoaking that had seven Springs or Flouds, the which when the Emperoz saw, he marvelled greatly, the Child said, Ye see this well, and without it be quenched, ye shall never have your



## Masters.

sight ; the Emperour said, How may that be ? the Child said, but by one way : The Emperour said, shew us then the means, and if it be possible to me it shall be done : that I may recover again my sight as well without, as within. To whom the Child said, My Lord; the Seven Springs of this Well, are these Seven Wise Masters; who hitherto have traiterously Governed you and your Empire, and have made yee blind as yee be without your Palace, that they your Subjects by extortion might pill and pole, you not seeing it. But now they know not the Remedy, therefore hear you now my Counsell, and this Well shall be quenched and extinct : Strike off the first Masters Head, and anon ye shall see the first Spring quench, and so by order one after another, till that they are all beheaded, and anon all the Springs, with the Well, shall be banished and gone away, and ye shall have again your sight as ye had before : and when this was done and fulfilled, the Well with the Seven Springs was banished. And as the Emperour had his sight again, he made the Child a great Lord, and gave him great abundance of goods : and after spoke the Empress, My Lord, have yee well perceived this Example that I have told you ? And hee said, Yea, in the best wise, and yee have recited a worthy and good Example. Then said shee, In the same manner your Seven Wise Masters

The seven wise  
sters intend to do with you, with their false  
narration, that your Son may raigñ ober your  
Empire, which God forbid.

The Declaration of the Example.

**T**his well is your son, whereout floweth se-  
ven Springs, that signifieth the seven wise  
Masters, the which Son ye may not destroy,  
without the seven wise Masters be made feeble  
and brought to nought: that done, this well that  
is your Son, with all his wiles shall not escape,  
but let him tast his death, which befits his de-  
serts, which are shamefull, lest he have a help of  
his Masters, and after consequently the seven  
Masters; & so you shall govern and guide your  
Empire in rest & peace. The Emperoz anon  
commanded his servants to lead his Son to the  
Gallows, which they were loth to do. So was  
there then a great multitude of people gathered  
with great noise and bewailing, so that the  
noise came to the Ear of the Fourth Master  
named Malquidrak, the which leapt upon his  
Horse, and hasted him to the Palace, where  
he met with his Disciple, and did reberence to  
him, and commended him unto him: and when  
he came befoze the Emperoz, and had done his  
obeyfance and reberence, as appertained, the  
Emperour then answered, and said, Little  
thanks shall you have, you old cursed Caitiffe,  
for

### Masters.

for so ill teaching my Sonne. I delibered yet  
my Sonne well speaking, and in all things  
right vertuous; But you have sent him home a  
fool, dumb, and a Kibald, for hee would have  
lain with my Wife by force, and therefore all  
ye forthwith together with him shall be hang-  
ed. Then said the Master, My Lord, I have  
not deserbed so ill of you, God knoweth why  
your Sonne speaketh not, in short time you  
shall perceiue other things. but the time is not  
yet come: but in that you say hee would have  
oppressed your Wife, that is not truch nor  
proved, neither for one single person should  
you iudge your Sonne to death: If now for  
the words of your Wife ye iudge your Sonne  
to die, it shall be worse to you, than to a certain  
old man and his Wife. and that I shall well  
probe. To whom the Emperoz said, I think  
you do with mee as sometime Seben wise Men  
did to an Emperoz, Whereunto said the Ma-  
ster, The offence or trespass of one, or yet of  
twenty, may not sound to the rebuke & blame  
of all other: but one thing of a truth I shall shew  
you, that evil shall come to you, if ye this day  
put your Sonne to death for the words of your  
Wife, of the which I could shew a notable Ex-  
ample. Then said the Emperoz, Will ye recite  
that for my learning? the Master said, If ye  
will call again your Sonne from death, then  
will I rehearse the Example, or else not. The



### The seven wife

Emperour commanded that he should be called again; and he desired the Master to say, as hereafter followeth.

#### The Example of the fourth Master.

**T**here was an old Knight and a right wise man that liued long without wife or child, his friends came to him oftentimes and counselled & exhorted him that he should take a wife.

The Knight thus counselled and stirred by his friends so oftentimes, at the last hee agreed to them; and they gave him to wife the daughter of the Probst of Rome, that was rich and of comely grace and feature, whom when hee had seen, anon he was made blind, and taken in her lobe, and began to lobe her marbelously well, and when they had been married a certain space together, and had no child, Upon a time in a morning it happened that she went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, who said, My Daughter, how pleaseth you your Marriage, and your Husband? shee said, Right vile; for you have giben to mee an old lame man to my discontentment in all respects, and I would you had the same time buried me, for I had rather lie, and eat with a Swine, than with him, and therefore I may no longer thus endure, but I must needs lobe another: Then said the Mother, God forbid that, my dear Daughter: how long time have I been with your Father, and yet never hitherto have I

Masters.

medled with such foolishness? The Daughter  
said, It is no marvell, for you both met in  
your youth together, and the one took solace of  
the other, but I can of him receiue no manner  
of corporall pleasure, for he is cold, and on the  
Bed he lieth as still as a stone or as a thing im-  
mobeable. The Mother answered, If you love  
another, tell mee what he is? The Daughter  
said, I well love a Priest: to whom the Mo-  
ther said, It were better, and lesse sin for you to  
love a Knight or a Squire: in short time hee  
would be weary of me, and after that he would  
do me shame, and so would not the Priest, for he  
will hold and keep his own honour and coun-  
sell as well as mine; also Spirituall men be  
more true to their lovers than secular men be:  
the Mother said, Hear my counsell, and it will  
be for your good, Old folks are wily, and fell,  
tempt your Husband first, and if you scape him  
without doing you harm, or smiting, then love  
the Priest. The Daughter said, I may not so  
long abide. The Mother said, Upon my blessing  
abide till you have probed: The Daughter  
said, Upon your blessing I will abide so long  
till I have attempted him, but first tell me how  
I shall probe him? The Mother said, he hath  
in his Orchard a tree which he loveth much,  
cause it to be smitten down while he is out at  
Hunting, and against his coming home make  
him a fire therewith, and if he forgibe it you,

### The seven wife

then may you surely lobe the Priest. As shee heard the Counsell of her Mother, shee went home, to whom her Husband said, where have you been so long? shee answered, I have been at the Church, where I met with my Mother, and with her I have a litle talked and communed, and so begaune properly to dissemble: after Mid-day, the Knight rode forth to Hunt, then she thinking upon the counsell of her Mother, went to the Gardiner, and said to him, cut down this yeung Tree newly planted, that I may make a fire thereof, to warm my Lord withall at his comming from hunting, for it is a great wind, and sharp, and cold. The Gardiner said, Madam, that I will not do, for my Lord loveth this Tree, better than hee doth all



Masters.

the other Trees, nevertheless I shall well help you to gather wood enough for to make a good fire, but in any case this I will not hew down. As shee heard that, then boldly shee took the Axe from the Gardiner, and hewed down the Tree her self, and made the Gardiner, with other, to bear it home. At evening, when her Lord came from hunting, he was very cold, and shee made a great fire and went and met with him, and set him a stool before the fire to warm him, and as hee a little while had sitten he perceived the odour of the fire, and called to him the Gardiner, And said, I feel by this odour that the new plant burneth in the fire; The Gardiner said, Lord it is true, my Lady, your Wife, hath felled it down. The Knight said unto her, God forbid that my Plant should be cut down by you: she answered anon, and said, Lord I have done it, knowing the weather cold and you also cold, and therefore I have obtained this fire for your comfort: and as the Knight heard that, hee looked angry upon her, and said, O cursed Woman, how wast thou so obdurate, relentlesse, and hard of pity, as to hew down so gentle a young Tree, the which thou knowest well that I loved it above all my other Trees? When he had so said, she began to weep, and excuse her self, and said, My Lord, I have done it for your good, and do you take it so grieuously? and began to cry, Alas, woe be to

me. Anon as the Knight saw the weeping and tears of his Wife, and heard the cause, hee was moved with pittie, and said unto her, Cease off your weeping, and beware how that you do anger me any more, or trouble me in any thing that I love. The next day early in the morning shee went again to the Church-yard, and met with her Mother comming home, and they saluted each other. Then the Daughter said to her Mother, O dear Mother, I will lobe the Priest, for I have attempted my Lord as you counselled mee, but all for nought, for he anon forgave it when he saw mee a little weep. Then said the Mother, Though old men for one time forgive, they double the pain another time, and therefore I counsell you, that you yet once again attempt him. Then said the Daughter, I may no longer abide, for I suffer so much pain for the love of the Priest, that with my tongue I cannot tell it, therefore you shall pardon me, I will no more follow nor do after your counsell: then said the Mother, for the love that the Child should have unto the Mother, attempt him yet once more for your Fathers blessing, & then if you go quietly without any harm or beating, lobe the Priest in the name of God. Then answered the Daughter, It is to mee great pain so long time to abide, nevertheless, for the blessing of my Father I will once more attempt him, but tell mee how I shall begin? The



The Mether said, I understand that hee hath a little hound that he loveth well, and keepeth his bed, cast the hound with so great might befoze his face, against the Wall that it dye, and if ye escape without a stripe, or that he forgibe you it lightly, then in the name of God lobe the Priest: When the Daughter said, I will in all things do after your Counsell, for there is no Daughter living at this day, that would more gladly have the blessing of the Father and Mother, than I: And so she bade the Mother farewell, and went to her house again, and that day with great importunity and trouble of her heart, she brought to the night, and when the night was come, she commanded the bed to be covered with purple and cloath of gold, whilst the Knight sate by the fire, and when the Bed was made thus ready, the little Hound as he was accustomed, did leap upon the Bed, and she took him by the hinder legs, and with a wood and malicious heart, she cast him against the Wall, that it lay still dead: When the good old Knight saw that, hee was marvellously angry, and said with a loud voice to his Wife, O thou most cruel and spitefull of all wicked women, how couldest thou find in thine heart to kill that gentle Hound that I loved so much? Lord, said she, have you not seen how the Hound with his feet (coming out of the Fire) hath berayed our Bed, that is so preciousely covered with

### The leuen wife

rich clothes. And the Knight said, with much anger; know you not that I loved much better my little Hound than the bed? when shee heard that, anon she beganne pitiously to weep, and said, Who be to me that eber I was born for all things that I do for the best, it is all turned into the worst. The Knight out of the treasure of his goodness and pittie would not suffer þ weeping and lamentation of his wife, but for that he loved her so well, he said unto her, cease your weeping, for I forgive it you altogether: and I counsell you that you beware how that you displease me from henceforth, and so they went to bed together.

Upon the morrow shee rose up very early and went to the Church, where she met with her Mother, to whom when she had done reverence as it behoved, shee said, Mother, now will I love the Priest, for I have attempted my Husband the second time, and all things hee hath suffered. The Mother said, O my dear Daughter, there is no cruelty or falshood aboue the cruelty of old folks, and therefore I counsell you, that you yet once more probe him: to whom the Daughter answered, Mother ye labour in vain, for if you wist what, and how much pains that I suffer for the Priests love, ye should rather help me, if ye loved me. The Mother said, hear me Daughter this one time, and I shall neber let you more, Think how you

Malters.

you haue sucked Milk out of my Breests, and the great pain that I suffered for you at your birth, by these pains, my dear Daughter, I desire and charge you, that you deny not this good petition, and I promise God no more to let you, nor hinder you of your intent, but rather to help you theretofore. Then answered the Daughter, It is to my great pain to abstain mee, and to forbear my self so long from the lobe of the Breast. Nevertheless for the great charge that ye haue laid to me, and also for that ye haue made a vow no more to let mee, but to further me, tell me how I might attempt him, and I shall once more give the adventure. The Mother said, I know well that on Sunday next coming, hee intendeth to haue us all at Dinner, and there shall be your Father, and I, and all your friends, with all the rest of the City; and when you are set in your place, and all the Meats are brought, and serued upon the Table, fasten your keyes priuily that hang at your Girdle in the Table-cloth, and then do you feign to haue forgotten your Knife, and say these words openly: See what a sport wit I am of, I haue forgotten my Knife in my Chamber: and then rise up hastily and go, and the Cloth, with all the Meats, you shall cast down, and overtthrow upon the ground: and if yee escape without pain, I make a vow to God, that I shall neuer let you after. The

Daugh-

The seven wile

Daughter said, That I shall gladly do, and so took her leabe and departed. The Feast day came, and all as the Mother said was bid, the serbant made ready and covered the Table, all were set at Table, and the Daughter sat ober against her Lord: and when the Table was well serbed with meats and other things thereto belonging, The Lady of the house said with a loud boice, See how forgetfull I am, I habe left my knife in my Chamber, which I must fetch, and so rose up hastily, and drew the Cloth with all the Meate upon it with her, and all the Gold Messells, and Saints, fell upon the ground: the Knight waied soze angry in heart, but he for shame dissembled befoze his guests, and commanded another clean Cloth, and other meats to bee bzought, and with ioy and mirth hee saluted his guests to eat and make good chear, that by him they were all made merrp: The Feast or Dinner done, they gave all thanks to the Knight, and took theire leabes and departed ebery man towards his owne house. Upon the next day in the morning the Knight rose early and went to the Church and heard Serbice, after which hee went to a Barbour, and said unto him, Sir, are you expert in blood-letting, in what bein that I will desire you? he said, Sir, I am expert in what bein that you can name in a mans Body. The Knight said, I am well content, come with me: and

and when hee was come to his house, he entred  
 into his Chamber where his wife lay in Bed,  
 and said unto her, rise up she: then said she,  
 What shall I do up so early, it is not yet nine  
 of the Clock: the Knight said, You must rise  
 up, for you must bae letten blood in both your  
 Arms: she said, I was never letten blood, and  
 shall I now bleed: then said the Knight, What  
 is truth, and therefore you are a fool. Remem-  
 ber yee not that first ye belovd down my Tree,  
 and another time you killed my little Hound, &  
 yester day you shamed me before all my friends  
 and Parents: and the fourth is, if that I should  
 suffer you thus to go on, you should for ever  
 confound and shame mee. The cause hereof I  
 consider, that you have evil and wild blood with-  
 in your body, and therefore I will that the cor-  
 rupt blood shall be drawn out, that yee from  
 henceforth shall put mee to no more shame and  
 anger, and so caused to be made a great Fire;  
 and she stood and cryed, and held up her hands  
 towards Heaven, and said, My Lord forgive  
 my trespass, and have pittie upon mee at this  
 time, and I will never more offend you. The  
 Knight said, Pray for no mercy, for the mercy  
 that God hath wrought towards thee at this  
 present, is this, that except thou holdest out  
 thine arm straight, I shall soon have thy heart  
 blood: and hee said also to the Barber, Smite  
 hard, and make a deep hole in her arm: or else



The leuen wile

I shall giue you a great stripe; then smote the Barber so sore, that the blood came abundantly out, and the Knight would not suffer him to stand it, untill the time that she changed her colour in her visage, and as this was done, hee bade it to be stopped, and tolled the Barber to smite the vein upon the other Arm: then she cryed with a very loud voice, My sweet Husband, I pray you haue compassion upon mee, for now I die: The Knight answered, Maife, you should haue thought upon this before, ere you had done to me these three euill torments or despights: then shee held out her left Arm, and the Barber smote therein a great hole that the blood came out right ugly, and hee suffered her to bleed untill the time that the colour in her visage was changed, and that shee twounded: Then said the Knight, Now bind her arm, and stand it, and said unto her Now go to bed and sleepe, and think henceforth how you may amend your life, or else I shall draw the blood of your heart; and as this was done, hee gave the Barber his reward, and then hee went again unto his own house, and his wife being under the hands of her Maids nigh dead, was led to her bed: shee bade one of her Maidens go to her Mother in all haste, and say that I desire her to come speak with mee before I die: the Mother when shee had heard that, was glad of the correction of her Daughter, and came hastily to her

## Masters.

her. When the Daughter heard her Mother, she said, O my most sweet Mother, I am almost dead, for I have bled so much blood, that I believe I shall not escape the death. Then answered the Mother. Said I not unto you that old men are right cruel and fell? wilt thou now love the Priest? She said, the Devil may the Priest confound and shame, I will never love other but my Husband. Then said the Master to the Emperour, Lord, have you understood me? and he answered, Right well, for amongst all other that ever I have heard, this was the best example. Three evil deeds she did unto her Husband, and I doubt not, but if shee had done the Fourth, she would have shamed him for ever. Then said the Master. Therefore I Counsell you that you beware of your Wife, lest it happen worse to you, which appears most manifestly in this example, if you put to death your onely Sonne for her words, you shall be deceived in the end, and so for ever wee shall repent it. The Emperour said, truly Master this day my Sonne shall not dy. The Master said, My Lord I thank you, that wee for mine example and my sake, this day have spared your onely Son.

The fifth Complaint of the Emperess.

**T**he Emperess hearing that the Child was not yet dead, forthwith apparelled her self, & she caused her wains & carts to be in readines,

### The seven wise

as though she would haue gone home into her  
own Countrey to her Father, for to haue com-  
plained of the great shame that was done unto  
her, and yet could haue no remedy thereof. The  
Seruants seeing that, went and shewed to the  
Emperour that the Emperesse was going into  
her Countrey: when he perceived that, he went  
to her, saying, whither are you going? I hoped  
that you had loved mee so much, that in all the  
world you would haue sought no solace but with  
me. To that she said That is true, and there-  
fore I goe from you, for I had rather hear of  
your death, than to see you dye: without doubt  
you delight so much to hear these Masters, hat  
it shall happen to you, as it did to Octavian  
the Emperour: the which was so covetous that  
the noble men of the Empire buried him quick,  
and filled his mouth full of molten Gold. The  
Emperour said, Dear Wife do not so, that a-  
nother time the blame to you and me might be  
said. Then said the Emperesse, Truely Sir the  
blame is yours; for haue you not promised mee  
many times that your Son should die, and yet  
he lieth? and therefore from henceforth I will  
no more beleue you: Then said the Emperour,  
It becometh not a King euer cause lightly  
to discuss without great aduise, and especially  
upon his Son, upon whom it is not meet but  
upon deliberation, good counsell, and aduised-  
ness to passe Iudgement, and therefore I say,  
and

## Masters.

and pray you, that ye will tell me somewhat by the which I may govern my life, for it is the utter destruction of a King, without advice and indiscreetly to give judgement. She answered and said, I will gladly tell you a notable example, so that from henceforth wee will not be covetous or desirous to hear the Masters, and so began to say this form following.

The fifth Example of the Emperess.

**O**ctavianus the Emperour reigned in Rome right rich, & covetous, & above all things he loved Gold; The Citizens of Rome all that time did much harm, and many great outrages to other Nations, in so much that divers Nations and Regions were moved and stirred against the Romans. In that time there was Master Virgilius, the which excelled in Magick and in other Sciences all other Masters: the Citizens prayed him that he by his art and cunning, would devise somewhat by the which they of their enemies might have warning and knowledge beforehand, whereby that they might provide for themselves the better. He made by his Art and Cunning a Tower, and above upon the Tower did cause to be set as many Images, as in all the world were Regions and Provinces: and in the midst of the Tower, hee let to be made and set an Image which held in his hand an Apple, or a great round Ball of Gold. And every Image of the  
Tower

### The seven wise

**T**ower held in his hand a lit tle Bell, and stood turning and looking towards his own province to him assigned : And as oftentimes as any Province would stirre and rebell against the Romans, so often, turned him to the Image of the Land, and rung the Bell, that hearing, the Citizens of Rome armed themselves, and to that Province hastied with all their might, the same to subdue : and so there was no Land so great, that could breake them upon the Romans, and therefore were they dread and feared ober all tye World. Also that Master Virgil made for the solace and comfort of the poore people, a light that alwaies burned, and by that light he made two Baths, the one of them hot, in the which the poore people might Wash and wash themselves : And the other cold, in the which they might themselves refresh. Betwixt that light and the Baths, hee made an Image standing, in whose forehead was written, *He that smiteth mee, shall anon have vengeance.* The Image stood there many years, and at the last there came a Clerk, and hee beheld the Image, and read the writing, and thought in himself, what vengeance he might find therefore : I beléebe better if that any man should smite thee, and that thou fallest therewith to the Earth, hee shall find some treasure under thy feet, and therefore is the writing, that no man should have it. And the Clerk lift up his hand



## Masters

hand, and gabe the Image a great stroke, that it fell to the ground: and anon the light was out, and the Images were banished away, and hee found no Treasure. The poore Folk perceiving that, were all sorrowfull, and said bitter curses and complaints upon him, that for his singular covetousnesse had destroyed the Image, & had robbed them of so great a solace and comfort: hereafter assembled three Kings, the which by the Romans had been oppressed, and suffered great wrongs, and went to take Counsell with them of their Councell, how they might best be avenged of the Romans, and some of them said, Wee do labour in vain, for as long as there standeth the Tower with the Images, we cannot do any thing against them.

At the Counsell arose up four Knights, and said to the Kings, Wee have thought on a good remedy how ye shall destroy the Tower with the Images: and that for to do and bring about, wee will our lives set to pledge, if that you will be at the cost. Then said the Kings, What cost shall we be at? They answered, we must have four Tunnes of Gold: Then said the Kings, Take the Gold, and fullfill your promise. The Knights took the Gold, and went towards Rome, and when that they were come thither in the night, without one of the Gates, in the Ditch full of Water, they drowned one of the Tunnes with the Gold in it, and another

### The seven wise

Tunne they drowned by the second Gate, and the Thrid Tunne they drowned by the Thrid Gate, and the Fourth Tunne by the Fourth Gate they drowned, and when they had thus done, early in the morning they entred into the City at an hour convenient; and as the Emperour went ober to the Part, they did him reberence as it behooved. The Emperour seeing them, demanded from whence they were, of what Science, and what Service they could do? And they answered, We are all of farre Countries, and Soothsayers so perfect, that there is neber a thing so priuily and secretly hid, but that we shall find it out by our dreames. Wee haue heard that ye labour and haue pleasure in such things, and therefore wee came unto you, to know if you had need of our service. The Emperour said, I shall probe you, and if it be so that I find you true, you shall haue of me great rewards and thanks. They said, We ask nothing for our labours, but the half deal of the Gold, which by us shall be found. The Emperour said, I am very well content: and thus they had with the Emperour many words. At night, when the Emperour was going to Bed, they said to him, My Lord, if it please you, this night shall the eldest of us set his cunning a work, and Dream: The thrid day hee shall shew you his Dream, and what it signifieth. The Emperour said, Go in Gods Name,

## Masters.

Name. And they went forth with great glad-  
 ness, and all this night they passed ober with  
 great joy and mirth, upon trust they should  
 come to a good purpose. When the third day  
 was come, they went early unto the Empe-  
 rour: the first of them said, My Lord, please  
 it you to go with us without one of the Gates  
 of the City, and I shall shew where there  
 is a Tunne full of Gold hid. The Emperour  
 said, I shall go with you, and see if it be true  
 that you say, And when they were come to the  
 place, they drew out the Tunne that they be-  
 fore there had put: The Emperour when hee  
 saw that, was glad, and gave them their part.  
 Then said the Second Dreamer, My Lord,  
 this night shall I Dream. When the Em-  
 perour said, God giue you a good Dream.  
 The next night came, and hee took out the  
 other Tunne, and gave it the Emperour, and  
 took also his share. In like manner did the  
 Third, & the Fourth; upon the which the Em-  
 perour was out of all measure ioyous and glad,  
 and said, he had not seen heretofore such true  
 and expert Sowrsayers, or Dreamers, as they  
 were. Then said they altogether at once, as it  
 had been out of one Mouth, My Lord, wee  
 haue one after another Dreamed, the which as  
 yee haue seen, they be all proved: but now if  
 it please, that wee may Dream all together,  
 this night, wee trust that to us shall be shewed

### The seven wise

where wee shall find a great quantity and substance of Gold and of Riches: The Emperour said. God giue you a good Dreame. which to me and to you may be profitable, On the next morrow they came again unto the Emperour, and said unto him, with countenances full of joy and gladnesse, My Lord, wee bring good and profitable tydings, for this night in our sleepe, such and so great a Treasure is to us shewed, the which if you will suffer it to be sought, you shall be so much enriched, that in this World shall be none like unto you. The Emperour said, Where should wee find Treasure: they said, Under the foundation of the Tower that the Images stand upon. The Emperour answered, God defend that I should for love of Gold, destroy the Tower with the Images, wherewith wee from our Enemies be defended and warned. They said to him again, My Lord, have you found us in our sayings otherwise than true and sightfull? The Emperour said, Nay: Oh Lord, said they, Wee with our own hands shall giue out the Gold, without hurting of the Tower or the Images. And it is expedient, that secretly in the night by us it be done, for dread of resort and concourse of the People, lest that it should runne in the noise and clamours of them, and also that they should not take that good Gold away from you and us. The Emperour said, Go in the  
Name

## Masters.

Praise of God, and do your best as you will or can, and I shall to morrow early come to you. Then went they with joy and gladnesse, and in the night they were let into the Tower, and then with great hast and diligence they undermined it, and on the next day, very early in the morning, they mounted upon their Horses, and rode again towards their own Country with great joy and glory, and ere they came without the sight of Rome, the Tower fell down on the morning ensuing. When it was fallen, and the Senators it perceived, they sorrowed greatly, and there was a great bewailing throughout all the City, and they went to the Emperour, and said, Lord, how may it be, that this Tower is thus fallen. by the which wee have alwayes had warning afore of our enemies? he answered, and said, To me came four false deceivers and feigned themselves to be Soothsayers, and that they could find treasure in the ground; And they said, That under the foundation of the Tower was hidden an innumerable Summe of Gold, the which they should undermine without hurtling of the Tower of Images; and I gave faith to them, and they have deceived me. They answered him, Wee have coveted so much Gold, that for your unsatiate covetousnesse we shall all be destroyed: but first your covetousnesse shall fall upon your self: They took him and led him to the



Capitoll, and laid him on his back, and poured his mouth full of Molten Gold, saying to him, You haue desired Gold, and therefore yee shall drinke Gold: and after they buried him quick. Not long after that, came the Enemy against the Romanes, and overcame and destroyed them all. Then said the Emperess unto the Emperour, Haue yee, my Lord, this Example well understood? and hee said, Right well: Then said shee, the Tower with Images, Is your Body with fibe Wits. As long as you do liue, there is none so hardy to trouble or make Warre upon you, ne upon your people; that hath your Soune right well understood with the Seuen Masters, and with their false narrations of Fables, seek how they may destroy you, for you are oer much contentous, to hear and incline to them, insomuch that they shall undermine you, and cast you under foot, and bring you to nought. The Images are your fibe Wits, that be all lost. And for as much as you be so childish and foolish, they shall destroy and slay you, and your Son shall obtain your Empire.

The Emperour said, Ye haue recited to mee a good Example, wherefore it shall not happen to mee, as it did with the Tower, but my Son first this day shall taste the bitternesse of death. To whom the Emperess said, if yee do so, yee shall speed well, and liue long.

Upon

## Masters.

Upon the same day hee commanded him to be led to hanging: and as he was led towards the Gallows, came riding against him upon an Horse, the fifth Master towards the Palace, and came before the Emperour, and saluted him with all reuerence, but he despised his salutation, and put him in fear of his life. And the Master said unto the Emperour, My Lord, I haue not deserved to dye, and for to despise my salutation, It is not for your Honour: for your Sonne hath not with us been of such condition, as wee repute him, as wee in short time shall find: and that hee speaketh not, It is of his great wisdom: and know wee, that hee shall well speak as his time cometh, though that hee now speaketh not, as you in short time shall hear. But forasmuch as that he would haue shamed your Wife, that beleeue not, for so wise a man as he is, would neuer attempt to shamefull a deed: and if wee put him to death for your Wifes words, wee shall not escape without shame and vengeance, like as Ippocraz escaped not without vengeance for the death of Galienus his Cousin. The Emperour said. What would I faine hear and understand. Then said the Master, what would it aball mee to tell you this narration for your profit, if in the mean season your Sonne shall die? Wherefore if wee will call again your Sonne, it shall be discovered at your pleasure,

I he seven wise  
 and after do as you think best. The Emperoz  
 hade call again his Son, and set him in prison,  
 and then began the Master to tell on this man-  
 ner, as hereafter followeth.

### The Example of the fifth Master.



Sometimes there was a famous Physician  
 named Ippocras, right cunning, the which  
 excelled all other in learning & Science: he had  
 with him his Nephew, or Kinsman, that was  
 called Galienus, the which he loved so much,  
 this Galienus was of an excellent wit, & appli-  
 ed all his mind & wit to learn of his Uncle the  
 Science of Physick. When Ippocras percei-  
 ved that, inasmuch as he could, hee hid from  
 him his cunning, fearing that he should excell  
 him

### Masters.

him in that knowledge, for the great wit that he was of. As Galienus saw this, he studied and exercised, in so much that in short time hee had perfect cunning in Physick, for the which Ippocras envied him much. It happened upon a time thereafter, that the King of Hungary sent his Messenger unto Ippocras, that hee should come unto him for to cure his Son. Ippocras excused himself, and would not go, but sent his cousin Galienus, with his Letters of excuse for his not comming. And when Galienus was come before the King, hee was right worshipfully receiued, and they marvelled why that Ippocras would not come. Hee excused him saying, that hee had many great things to do; and he might not come; but he hath sent me in his stead, and, with the help of God, I shall make whole the Child: that pleased very well the King. Galienus went to the Child, and when hee had seen his Urine, and touched his Pulses, hee said to the Queen, O excellent Princess; I pray you hear & suffer my words, and tell mee who is the Father of the Child? she said, who should be his Father, but my Lord the King? Galienus said, I am sure he is not the Father: she answered, if you will say that, for a trow I shall cause your head to be smote off; he answered, I say once again, that this King is not the Father, and I am not therefore come hither to lose my head, for I have not de-  
serued

### The seven wise

terbed any such reward, and so was going his way. The Queen spake, O good Master Galienus, if yee will keep it secret, and not discover mee, I shall shew and open unto you my heart. The Master said, God defend that from me, that I to any person shoul shew it, & therefore O noble Queen, shew it boldly to me, for it shall never pass my mouth, and afterwards I shall ease and make your Sonne whole: she said, If yee do that, ye shall have a good reward of mee, and hear therefore what I shall say. My Fortune I came hither unto my Lord the King of Burgundy, and hee was so long conberfant with me, that this Child by him I bare. Then said the Master, fear ye not, I know that it was so before. And anon he gabe the child medicines and compounded things whereof to eat and drink, and the child was eased of his infirmity. And when as the King heard, that the Child was cured and recovered of his sickness, hee gabe unto the Master a good reward, but of the Queen hee secretly received a great gift, and a speciall thank, and so went his way. And when that hee was come home, Ippocras his Master demanded of him, saying, Have ye beheld the Child? and he said, Yea: then asked he him what he gabe him, either compounded or uncompounded things? Then said Ippocras, that Woman of the Child is not true to her Husband, that is troth, said Galienus, then Ippocras  
was



### Malters.

was mobed with enby, and thought in himself, If there be not found a remedy my Science shall no more be set by, but he shall be named and praised aboue mee. And from that day forward, he bethought him, and adressed how he might slay him. Upon a day Ippocras called him, and said, come, go with mee to seek and gather Herbs in the Garden. To whom he said, Master, I am ready: and when they were come into the Garden, Ippocras said, I feel that this Herb is right vertuous, stoop down and gather me of it. And Galienus did so, and as they went about the Garden, said Ippocras, Now I well perceibe the odour of this Herb, that it is better and more precious than Gold, and therefore stoop down to the ground, and draw him out with the root, for it is much worth. Galienus bowed down himself to pull out the Herb: and Ippocras drew out his Knife & killed him. After that, Ippocras fell sick to the death, that the strength of his Body failed him, and did as much as he could to help himself, but that could not be: and as the Scholars & Disciples heard of it, they went hastily unto him, and did all that they might or could do. for the profit of his health; but it abailed them nothing.

When Ippocras thus perceived, he said unto the Scholars, Go fetch me a great Tunne, and fill it full to the brims with water: and when they had so done, he said unto them, make  
now

### The seven wise

now therein an hundred holes; and when that was also done, there went none of the Water out. Then said Ippocras, Behold my most dear Disciples, how that the vengeance of God is fallen upon me, as ye may openly see, for in this Luane are an hundred holes, and yet goeth not thereout any drop: Right so there cometh no vertue out of the Herbs to help mee: and therefore what you do unto me helpeth not, for I must dye: But my dear Childzen, if my Nephew Galienus were now alive, hee could heal me, whom I have slain, and that grieberh me sore, and therefore the vengeance of God cometh upon me: and this said, he turned him to the Wall, and gave up the Ghost. Then said the Master unto the Emperoz, My Lord, understand pee well what I have said: hee answered, Yea, right well: what hurt had it been to him if Galienus had lived?

The Master answered, It had been right good for Ippocras at that time, had not he died, and therefore by right wise judgement of God, his Medicine abailed him not, and therefore I shewed to you that it shall happen worse to you, if that you put to death your Sonne for the words of your Wife, who in time of necessity shall assist & succour you. And consider ye not, that pee have after the first Wife wedded this Wife that pee now have, and so pee may the Third and Fourth, and never shall ye have of  
any

## Masters.

any of them such a Sonne, that shall keepe and  
save you from peril. The Emperour said, A rule  
he shall not dye.

When said the Master, then do ye that which  
both becomes the wisdom of your years, and  
the Royalty of your person: and I commend  
you to God, and I thank you that ye have this  
day for mee spared your Son. The Emperour  
said, I mark this well, that Women are crafty  
and subtil, therefore I will not for you, but for  
my self, save him.

### The sixth Complaint of the Empress.

**W**hen as the Empress had knowledge  
thereof, shee shewed her self so froward  
and impatient a Body, that all that saw her or  
heard her, wondred, and said to the Emperour,  
your wife shee pineth away her self, as though  
shee would shortly dy. The Emperour hearing  
thereof, went to her & said, wherefore (good La-  
dy) be ye so impatient? she answered, saying, O  
Lord, how should I hold it in, when I am the  
only daughter of a King, & your wife? & in your  
company I have had a great despite and shame,  
& continually you have promised me to punish  
him, but yet ye perform it not. The Empe-  
rour said, I wot not what I shall do: ye labour  
from day to day to have my Son put to death,  
and the Masters labour to save his life; and  
amongst all these I know well that he is my  
Son, but where the truth is, that I know  
not

The seven wise  
 not. When said she, this is the cause whereof I  
 complain, that yee beleue the Masters more  
 than you do mee : and therefore it shall happen  
 to you, as it did to a King with his Steward.

Then said the Emperoz; tell mee that Exam-  
 ple, peradventure it may moue mee the sooner to  
 put my Son to death. She said, Gladly, but I  
 pray you giue attention to what I shall say,  
 and began to tell, as hereafter ensueth.

The fifth Example of the Emperess.



There was a King molt proud & deformed  
 in his visage, in such wise, that all women  
 hated him. This King thought to destroy all  
 Rome, and to take & carry away the Bodies of  
 Peter and Paul: While while hee was in this  
 mind, called to him his Steward that was  
 right

Masters.

right secret with him of his Priby Counsell:  
and said to him, Go and seek a fair Wo-  
man that this night may sleep with mee. The  
Steward answered, My Lord, yee know well  
your infirmity and disease, and that no woman  
will do ebill, without a great summe of money.  
The King said, think you that for my money I  
will want one? Have I not Gold and Silber  
enough? though it were a thousand Florents,  
I would it gladly gibe. The Steward hearing  
that, was anon smitten with Cobetousnesse,  
and went to his own Wife which was right  
fair and chaste, and of good kindred, and said to  
her, O my good wife, my Lord desireth and co-  
beteth for to sleep with a fair and beautifull  
woman, and will not forbear it, though that  
shee would ask of him a thousand Florents:  
and hath commanded mee to provide him one.  
And therefore I Counsell you that ye to us get  
that Money. The Wife said, Where it so that  
the King were not so proud and so foul of bi-  
stage, yet would I not to that ebill consent, for  
the sinne against God. The Steward said, I  
counsell and command you, and promise you,  
that without yee consent to me herein, ye shall  
neber hereafter have good day with me: she hea-  
ring that, trembled, insomuch that for fear shee  
consented unto him.

The Steward then went to the King, and  
said, Sir, I have found out a fair Woman, and  
thee



### The seven wise

she is come of a very good House, which will not less have than a thousand Florents; and in the evening she shall come, and early in the morning she must away, that she be not seen of the People. The King answered, and said, I am well content. When the night was come, the Steward led his Wife to the Kings Bed, and made fast the Door, and so went his way: early in the morning the Steward arose, and went to the King, and said, My Lord, it will be day within a while, it is good that you perform your promise, and let the Woman go: The King said, this Woman pleaseth mee so well, that so soon she shall not depart from me: When he heard that, he departed thence all sorry, and tarried but a while, and came to the King again, and said, My Lord, the Morning is come, therefore let the woman go as I have promised her, lest shee be ashamed. The King said, Yet shall she not go from me, and therefore go out and shut the Door again. The Steward right sorrowfull, departed, and went up and down with an heaby and angry heart, till that the fair and clear day appeared, and then hee entred again into the Chamber, and said, My Lord, it is clear day, suffer the Woman to depart, that shee be not therewith ashamed. The King answered, I say to you of a troth, shee shall not yet depart, for her company is to mee right pleasant and acceptable.

The

The Steward hearing that, could no longer  
 forbear to hold his own Counsell, but said to  
 the King, O my good and gracious Lord, I  
 beseech you suffer her to depart, for it is mine  
 own Wife. The King hearing that, said to  
 him, Open the Window; and when it was  
 open, the fair and bright day appeared, and he  
 beheld the Woman right fair and goodly, and  
 perceived that it was the wife of the Steward,  
 and said to him, O thou stain to Manhood, and  
 shame to thy creation; why hast thou for so lit-  
 tle Money, shamed and undone thy fair and good  
 Wife, and hast delivered her unto me unwit-  
 ting? Therefore hast thou, and get thee gone  
 out of my Realm, and nevermore hereafter  
 come in my sight; for from henceforth if ever  
 I may see thee, thou shalt dye the most shame-  
 full & horrible death, that ever can be imagined.  
 When the Steward heard that, he fled his way,  
 and durst not abide, and was never so hardy  
 any more to come into the Realm. And the  
 King kept that wife all his life-time in great  
 honor, and gave to her plenty of all things that  
 to her behoved and appertained.

After that, the King caused to be gathered  
 and assembled a great and mighty Army, of pu-  
 issant men of Marr, and so he went to the  
 City of Rome with great might, and besieged  
 the City on all sides, so long, untill the Ro-  
 manes would have delivered to him (for to have  
 departed

## The seven wise

departed and withdrauwn himself from thence) the Bodies of the holy Apostles Peter & Paul.

Then there was in the City seven wise Masters, as ye have now, by the Counsell of whom all the City was guided and governed. And the Citizens came to them, & said, What shall we now do? it behoobeth us that we give unto our deadly Enemies the Bodies of the holy Apostles, or else the City. Then answered the first master, I shall with my wisdom and cunning this day save the City, and the bodies of the Apostles. And so every one of them for one day, promised to do the like; In like manner as your Masters have promised your Sonne. With that the King began to assault the City on all parts: Then began the first Master to say, and to allege so wisely, for to have peace, that the King that day left his assault, and withdrauwn himself a little from the City, and so did all the Masters do one after another, till the last. Unto whom came the Burgeses of the City, and said, O Masters, ye shall understand, that the King hath made his oath & sworn, that to morrow with all his Puissance and strength, he will have and win the City, or else we must be all in jeopardy to lose our lives: therefore in acquitting your promise, defend and keep us from danger, like as your Fellows before you had done. Then answered the Masters, & said, We of good com-

## Masters.

fort and fear not; for to-morrow I shall, by  
 my cunning, shew such a work and operatlow,  
 that the King, and all his Puissance and Might  
 shall flie away and leave the siege. The next  
 day the King made and gave a great assault un-  
 to the City: Then went the Master and cloa-  
 thed himself in a marvellous strange besture,  
 having therein the Feathers or tayles of Pea-  
 cocks, and of other Fowls of divers colours,  
 and took two bright Swords in each hand one,  
 and went therewith, and stood upon the highest  
 Tower of all the City, and began to move  
 and turn, and shew himself about on on parts  
 towards the Hoast, so that they might all be-  
 hold and see him; and he held in his mouth the  
 two bright Swords that marvellously shined:  
 they without of the Kings hoast beholding that,  
 said unto him, O King, behold upon the high-  
 est of yonder Towers a wonderful thing. Pea,  
 quoth he, I see it right well; it is marvellous,  
 but what it is, I know not. They say, It is  
 the God of Christian Folk, that is come out of  
 Heaven to slay and destroy us with his two  
 Swords if we any longer abide. The King hea-  
 ring that, trembled for fear, and said, What shall  
 we do: there is but one way, and that is, that  
 we anon go and depart from hence, lest that  
 their God avenge himself upon us. Then be-  
 gan the King, with all his Hoast, to flye: Pot-  
 withstanding there was no need, but that they



## The seven wise

of the Mafter were beguiled and deceived: And when the Romans saw that, they hastily pursued after, armed in good Ordinance, and the King, with many of his people they killed and destroyed, and in that manner by great subtilty of the Masters, was the mighty King with his Army subdued. Then said the Emperesse to the Emperour, Lord, ye have understood what I have said: he said, Yea, very well, with good attention. She said, Now ye have heard what I have said unto you, at the beginning of this narration of the Steward, that the King trusted so much, which for covetousness of Gold thamed his own Wife, and he for that was driven and banished out of the Land: In like manner your Sonne, for the desire and appetite that he had to the Empire, intendeth to confound and destroy you; But whiles ye be in your might and power, do with him as the King did with the Steward: If you will not put him to death, then put him out of your Empire, that you may without fear live in safeguard of your life. And have you not also heard how the King lay before the City of Rome, and how he was by the Wise Masters deceived and scorned, and that he with his followers were killed and slain: In the same manner the Seven Wise Masters intend to deal with you, and with crafty wiles and subtilties, to deceive you, and in the end, trayterously



## Masters.

to murder you, that so your Son might reigne  
be whole Governour of your Empire. Where-  
upon answered the Emperour, and said, That  
shall not be so, for to morrow my Sonne shall  
die. Then he commanded his servants that  
forthwith they should lead his Sonne to Exe-  
cution. When the People had heard these  
tidings, they gathered themselves together in  
great Troops, much lamenting and bewailing  
for the death of the Emperours Sonne. And so  
soon as the first Master had heard thereof, he  
hasted him to the Emperours Court, and sa-  
luted him with great reverence; but he took  
all things very disdainfully, and threatened him  
that he should be put to death with his Sonne,  
for that he was with them made dumb, and a  
Ribauld, which was shewed towards his  
Wife. The Master said, I have not deserved  
to die with your Sonne, but to have great and  
large gifts; for he is not dumb, as you shall  
hear within three daies, and if he may live so  
long; but if you put him to death for the words  
of your Wife, then shall I marvail at your  
wisdom; and without doubt it shall happen  
to you, as sometimes it happened to a Knight  
that so much allowed the saying of his Wife,  
that he was bound to an horse-tail, and draw-  
throughtout all the City to the Gallows. The  
Emperour said, For the love of God shew me  
that Example, that I may the better beware of

## The seven wise

that perill. That I will not do, said the Master. without you do call again your Son. Then he commanded to call back his Son : and the Master began as followeth.

### The Example of the sixth Master.

**S**ometimes there was an Emperour of Rome which had three Knights whom he loved above all others. In the same City there was an ancient Knight that wedded a fair young Wife, which above all other things he loved, as you do the Emperesse : the Lady could sing right well, and melodiously, and with such sweetnesse that many drew to her house, and desired her company. It befell on a season, as she sate in her house, her visage turned into the street, that she might see them that walkt by, and began sweetly to sing, that all folk delighted to hear her. By chance came that waies a Knight of the Emperours Court, that heard her voyce, and beholding her with a willing mind, and attentive ear, he was exceedingly taken in her love : and then entring into her house, fell into communication and talk with her greatly, but chiefly of Love : and amongst all other talk, he demanded of her what he should give unto her to sleep by her side onenight. She answered him, One hundred Florents, Then said the Knight, tell me when I shall come, and I shall give you an hundred Florents, Sir Knight, quoth she, when I have  
con:

convenient time I shall send for you, The next day she sung again in the same place, and it fortun'd the second Knight of the Emperours Court to come by that same way, the which likewise was smitten in her love; and he also promised her an hundred Florents: To whom also she promised to shew him a time provided. The third day also there came to her a Knight, and he in like manner was taken in her love; to him likewise she consented, and he promised her an hundred Florents, if that she would but give him knowledge of the time: which she also promised. These three Knights having so secretly spoken with the Lady, that not one of them had any knowledge of anothers coming unto her. Now the Lady that was thus malicious and deceitfull, came to her Husband, and said, Sir, I have a secret matter to shew unto you, wherein if you will follow my Counsaile, our necessity and poverty you may largely relieve. When the Knight replied, Tell it me, and I will keep it as secret as my life, and fulfill it to the uttermost of my power. She answered and said, Three Knights of the Emperours Court have been with me of late, and another, in such wise, that not one of them knoweth of anothers Counsel, and each Knight hath offered me an hundred Florents. Might we three hundred Florents get, and no man have knowledge thereof, should it not

### The seven wise

be to us) great help, and our poverty be well relieved: then said the Knight, Forsooth yea, and therefore whatsoever you shall counsaile me to do, I shall most willingly perform; Then said she, Thus do I give you counsell, that when these Knights shall come with their Florents, you shall stand behind the Gate, with your sword drawn in your hand; and as they come (being that they come one after another) you shall slay them, and so we shall have those three hundred Florents that they bring, without any mans knowledge thereof. The Knight answered, O my most best beloved Wife, I fear that this evill cannot be hid, and then we should therefore suffer death, if that it were known. She answered and said, I shall this Work begin, and I shall thereof make a good end, and fear it not. When the Knight saw that she was so hardy, it caused him to be the more bold; Then she sent for the first Knight, and he came to her anon without any tarrying to the gate, and knocked, and she asked if he had brought the hundred Florents. He answered and said, Yea, I have brought them with me. Then she led him in, and he had no sooner entered, but that her Husband murdered him. Immediately after, came the second Knight, and in like manner was slain. And not long after that, came the third Knight, whom he also slew, and having finished the Butchery, they



## Masters.

conveyed their Murthered Bodies into a secret Chamber fit for that purpose. When they had thus done, the Knight said unto the Lady, O dear Wife, if that these dead Bodies should be found with us, we shall die the most shamefull death that can be imagined; for it is not possible but that these three Knights will be missed in the Emperours Court, and great search and inquisition will be made for them throughout all this City, where they are become. She answered, & said, Sir Knight, I have now this work begun, and will therefore make a good end, fear it not, as I have said before. This Lady had a Brother, the which had the whole Government of the Wealth of the City, that on the Nights watched in the Streets with his Fellows: he stood at her Gate, and called unto her Brother, and said unto him, O my most best beloved Brother, I have a secret matter the which I would make known unto you, and therefore come in with me, and I will relate it unto you. And when that he was entered into the House, the Lady received him Friendly, and gave him Wine to drink, and said, my beloved Brother, this is the cause that I have called you, for I have much need of your counsell. The Brother answered, and said, Speak it boldly unto me, and whatsoever I may do, to my power, that shall be at your desire without letting. Then said she unto him,  
Wester



## The seven wise

peſterday came a Knight in good friendſhip, but afterwards he fell into ſuch words and variance with my Husband, that he ſlew him, and he lyeth here in my Chamber: Now my dear Brother, we have no man that we may put truſt in but only you, and if that this dead Body be found in our Houſe, we ſhall be put to death. Now ſhe made mention but of one. Her Brother ſaid unto her, Deliber him unto me in a Sack, and I ſhall bear him to the Sea: She hearing that, was full glad thereof, and delivered unto him the Body of the firſt Knight: he took it, and went withall a good ſpace, & caſt him therein; and as ſoon as this was done, he came again unto his Siſter, and ſaid unto her, Give me now of the beſt Wine, for you are of him quit, and ſhe gave him thanks, and went unto her Chamber as though ſhe had gone for Wine, and began to cry out with a loud voyce, The Knight that was caſt into the Sea, is come again. As her Brother heard that, he wondered ſore, and ſaid, Give me him; I ſhall ſee if he will riſe again, and took the Body of the ſecond Knight, (ſuppoſing it had been the Body of the firſt Knight) and went to the Sea, and with a great Stone he drowned him therein. That done, he went again to his Siſters houſe, and ſaid, now fill me a Cup of good Wine; for I have drowned him ſo deep, that he ſhall never come again. Then ſaid ſhe, Thanks be to God.

God, and went again to her Chamber, and fained her to fetch Wine, and cryed with a loud voyce, Alas ! wo be to me, he is risen again and come out of the Sea. And as her Brother heard that, with a great marvell said, What Devil is this Knight that I have cast into the Water, and yet notwithstanding he is come again : Deliber him me the third time, and I shall see if he will come again. Then she gave to him the third Knight, which he did before beleve had been the first, and went without the City to a great Forrest, and made a great fire to cast the Knight therein; and when he was almost burnt, the Brother went thence a little distance to do his need. Then came there a Knight that was to ride to the City, where in the morning they should have a Tourney and Justing; and it was cold weather, and dark, and he was not far from the City : and when he had sight of the fire, he drew thereto, and lighted from his horse & armed him. The watchman came & said to him. What art thou? The Knight said, I am a gentle Knight. Then spake the watchman & said, Thou art no knight, but a Devil; for I first cast thee into the water, the second time with a great stone I drowned thee, and the third time I have put thee in this fire, supposing thou hadst been burnt, and yet thou standest here: and then he took the Knight with his horse and cast them both into the fire.

After

### The seven wi'e

After that he went again unto his Sister, and told what had happened to him, and said, Now bring me of the best Wine, for after that I had burnt him, I found him again by the Fire with a Horse, & I have cast them both into the Fire; and by this his Sister perceived well that he had burnt a Knight of the Tourney; who anon brought him of the Wine abundantly, and after he had well drunken, he went thence. Not long time after, there fell a great debate and contention betwixt the Knight and his Wife, in such wise that he smote her, so that she had indignation thereof, and waxed angry, and said, that many might hear, O wretch, wilt thou kill me as thou hast done the three Knights of the Emperors? Certain men hearing that, laid hands on them, and brought them before the Emperour, and the Woman confessed that her Husband had slain three Knights of the Emperors, and how he took from them three hundred Florents. And it was thus in troth found, both were drawn at a horse-tail, and hanged upon the Gallows. Then said the Master to the Emperour, have you understood what I have said? He answered right well: I say for certain that Wife was the worst Woman that might be of all women; for first she moved and stirred him up to murder, and afterwards discovered him. The Master answered and said, Without doubt it shall happen unto you worse,

if

## Masters.

if you put your Sonne to death by the adlice of your Wife. The Emperoz said, My Son shall not die this day. The Master hearing that, gave thanks to the Emperour, and took leave, and went his way.

The seventh complaint of the Empress.

**V**hen the Empress heard that the Son of the Emperoz was yet living, as a mad Woman she ran to the Emperoz, weeping and crying, saying, Unhappy Woman; alas, what shall I do: I must needs slay my self, that am so shamed, and no punishment thereupon done; the Emperour answered, God defend that you should have mind on such a wicked deed; but suffer a while, and you shall have a good end of your cause. She answered, Sir, the end shall be evil; for of that shall follow to you & me a great confusion. The Emperoz said, Leave off such talk. She said, Lord, it shall come to you & your Son, as it hapned unto a King and to his Steward; I pray you tell me that Example; she said, I will gladly tell it, but I fear that you will hear me no more: For the next day the seventh Master shall speak, and save your Son from the death, as the other six of his Fellows have done. And the next day after that, your Son shall speak; of those words you shall have and take such joy and delectation, that the love betwixt us shall be wholly forgotten and washed away. The Emperoz said, That is impossible



### The seven wise

possible to me, for I shal never forget your love.

Then said she, O my best beloved Lord, if it please you I will tel you one Example, by the which you shall beware befoze of many perills to come, and especially of your accursed Son, who intendeth to destroy me by his Masters, the Emperoz said, tell on your example. And the Empresse began to tell of this, as hereafter folloiweth.

#### The Seventh Example of the Empresse.



**T**here was sometime a King, which loved his wife above all things: insomuch that he closed her in a strong Castle, and he bare the keys of the Castle himself: the Lady was therefore right heavy and comfortless. Now in far Countries there was a valiant Knight, the  
which



## Masters.

which on a time lying on his Bed, dreamed after this manner. He thought verily that he saw one of the fairest Queens that ever mans eye might behold, whose love aboue all other Women he desired to obtain; and if that he might see her walking, he should certainly have some knowledge of her, by whom towards him great Friendship and Honor should come. To the Queen the same night by vision of the said Knight, the like was also straightly beuowed, and as yet they have not any knowledge of each other; neither of name nor yet of fame. When the Knight had thus dreamed, and seen (as he thought) a most vertuous and comely Lady in his sleep, he then determined in his mind, that his foot should take no rest, untill the time that he had found out the Lady that to him in his dream seemed so glorious: And having taken his Horse, and with him all that was necessary for his Journey, he then travailed throughout diuers Regions, Countreies, and Kingdomes, so long, untill at last he came into the same Land where this aforesaid Queen was by her jealous Husband inclosed, and kept in a strong Castle. And when this said Knight was come into the said City, and having for a certain season therein sojourned, It so fell out, that upon a day as the Knight walked by the Castle (and knew not as then that the Queen was therein kept) she was at

that

## The seven wise

that time sitting in a window, to behold and see the People passing by, and amongst all others, she espied the Knight that before we spake of, and knew him to be the same man, of whom she had dreamed before, and the Knight by chance lifted up his eyes, and perceived the Lady sitting in the window, and anon his mind gave him that it was she of whom he had dreamed, and she began to sing a Song of love. And as he heard that, he was then taken with her love. The Knight from thenceforth daily went and walked about the Castle, beholding it all over, to espy if that any manner of way he might get in, to declare the secret of his mind unto her. When the Lady perceiving that, she presently indited a Letter, and secretly conveyed it unto him from forth the Casement of her Chamber window: And when he had perused over her Letter, and understanding the will of the Lady, he without any delay began to haunt Jousts and Tournaments, and he did perform so many great and marvellous Acts, that the fame of him came to the ears of the King. And as soon as the King heard thereof, he sent after him, and said unto him, Sir Knight, I have heard that you have got much honor at our Jousts and Tournaments, wherefore if it will please you to abide here, and dwell with us we shall give you large gifts, and rewards. The Knight answered and said; O right mighty

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## Masters.

ty Prince, I am your servant ; would to God that I could do any service that might be pleasing unto your Magnificence, without taking of any reward, save one thing before all other I desire. The King said unto him, Shew it unto me boldly what thing that is. The Knight answered, My Lord, seeing that it hath pleased your most Excellent Majesty for to take me for your servant, and one of your most Grave Councell, it now seemeth unto me to be most expedient for both our delights, that I had a place nigh unto the wall of the Castle, that I at all times might be the more ready at your calling, when you have need. The King answered, and said I consent unto you ; make it as you shall think best. Then the Knight caused many Work-men to be brought before him, and having so done, he chose out certain men fit for his purpose, and caused them to build a fair Lodging neer unto the walls of the Tower ; and all this being finished, he made a Covenant with one of the Work-men (whom he thought fittest for that purpose) to make out of his House a secret way to the Queens Lodgings : And when this was finished according to his desire, he then killed the workman, because he should not make it known unto any. And having thus done, he then went in unto the Queen, and did her reverence, for it did become him so to do ; and they discoursed of

## The seven wise

many matters : and having thus passed away the day, and the night drawing on, he then desired that he might sleep by her one night ; but she oftentimes did deny him : and yet nevertheless she consented unto his request. And now they having spent the night in their pleasures, and the morning being come, this Knight then returned to his own Lodgings : And the Queen beganne to think with her selfe, and said, what shall I do ? If I should make the King my Husband acquainted herewith, there would two evils come thereof ; the one is my shame, and that peradventure he should utterly forsake me, and cause me to be driven out of his land for ever. The other is, that he would slay the Knight, for from death it was not possible for him to escape ; and therefore I think it to be more expedient for me to be secret herein, than for to reveal it unto any. After that the Knight, as often as he pleased him, went in unto the Queen, and did his will with her, and she gave him a Ring, the which the King had given her at her Wedding. This Knight was so famous, and had such excellent knowledge in Juggling, that in every Battell and Tournament, he had the victory ; for which cause he was held in great estimation and labour with the King, so that he made him his Steward and Governour over all his Reason and Land. It happened upon a day



## Masters.

that the King was disposed to ride on hunting, wherefore he commanded his Steward to make him ready on the morrow for to go with him: whereunto he offered himself most willingly. And upon the morrow after they entred into the Forrest; and all the day they chased and followed the wild Beast, that they were so weary grown, that the King did sit down by a fountain to rest him; and the Knight by his side, and the Knight was no sooner set, but he fell asleep by the King, having the Ring upon his finger, which the Queen had given him, which the King perceiving and marking, did know it right well. Now when the Knight waked, and perceiving that the King had seen the Ring, then he feigned himself to be sore sick, and said unto him, My honored Lord, I feel my self so sore sick, that if I do not, withall speed I may, haile me to my Lodging, and there seek out some present remedy, either by means of Physick, or by some other course, or else I am but a dead man; and therefore I pray you to give me leave to go home. Unto whom the King, made this answer, and said, Go my dear Friend, in the Name of God, and see that there be nothing wanting which may procure thy Health, that either my Court or Kingdom can afford, The King had no sooner ended his speech but immediately the Knight took his leave of him, and



## The seven wise

getting upon his Horse, he then hasted unto his house, and as soon as he was come home, he presently alighted, and hasted him to the Queens Lodgings, and gave her the Ring again; and he told her withall how that the King had espi- ed it upon his finger, when they were both weary and sat down to rest: and with all he told her that he feigned himself to be soze sick, for which cause the King gave him leave for to return back to his Lodging: he also prayed her, that if the King at any time should call for the Ring, that immediatly she should shew it unto him. This done, he took his leave of the Queen, and went down again to his Lodging. And not long after that, the King came unto the Queen, and the Queen received him right lovingly; and after that a little time was passed, the King said unto her, My renowned Lady, shew me where the Ring is that I gave to you, for I have a great desire to see it. She answered, and said, O my best beloved Lord, to what intent at this time do you desire to see it? Then said he, If you shew it not to me incontinently, it shall repent you. Then she arose up and went unto her Chest, and took the Ring out of it, and having thus done, she brought it to the King her Husband: and when he had seen it, he then was half ashamed, and said unto her, my best beloved Queen; O how like is the Knights Ring, unto this your Ring,

which I saw upon his finger! for I beleev'd that it had been mine, and therefore that was the cause why I did ask so hastily of you for it. And now of this evill suspicion I yield my self guilty against you, my dear Lady, in this behalf, for the strength of the Tower deceived me; for I thought none could get therein but I my self alone, in regard that no man hath the keeping of the keyes but my self onely. She said unto him, My dear Lord, wonder not, for one King may be like unto another; and Workmen do seldome make one peece of work, but that there are others that make the same: but God forgive you in that you have so suspected me, for you know the strength of the Tower, and the keys you have always in your presence, and will trust no man therewith. After that, the Knight ordained a great Dinner, and said unto the King, My Sovereign; it is so, that, my Lady and Love is come hither from out of my Country to seek me, for whose sake I have ordained a Dinner to be made, therefore I would entreat your Highness that you would do me that honour, as to dine with mee at my House this day, and to take such meat, as shall be there provided. The King answered, and said, Most willingly will I do unto you that worship and more. The Knight was glad therof, and then by his secret way he went unto the Queen, and said unto her

## The seven wise

My welbeloued Lady you must doe this, you shall come to my house the private way, and you shall cloath your self in rich cloathing, and deck your self with Jewels, and other Ornaments, according to the manner and custom of my Country, and then shall you sit at the table with my King, as my Sovereign Lady, and make him good cheer. She replied unto him after this manner, Sir Knight, I shall be ready to do all things according to your desire; and when the time appointed was near at hand, and that the King was coming from the Castle towards the Knights house, in the mean time, by the secret way, the Queen did enter into the Knights Lodgings (before that the King could come thither) and apparellled her self after the manner of the Knights Country. And when the King was entred into the house, she meeting him with Courtey salutations received him: And when the King had beheld her: he demanded of the Knight what Woman she should be that seemed unto him so faire? then answered the Knight and said, My renowned Lord, it is my Sovereign Lady, that now even for the love that she beareth me, is come out of my Country after me, to know wherefore I should absent my self so long, both from her love and service. Now their speech being ended, the Knight caused the King to sit down at the Table, and made the

Queen

Queen to sit by him, and the King thought that it was his Queen, and said within himself, *O how like is this Woman unto my Wife? So the strength of the Tower did deceive him,* that he gave more faith and credence unto the Knights words, than he did his own eyes, The Queen began to speak, and to talk to the King, and to stirre him to eat and drink, and make good chear: and as the King heard that voice, then he said unto himself, *O blessed Lord, how like is this Woman to my Queen, in her behaviour, spech, visage, and in all other things and Conditions? and still the strength of the Tower deceived him.* In the end of the Feast, the Knight prayed his beloved Lady to sing a Song befoze the King, and she began to sing a Song of Love: When the King had heard her, he knew her voice, and thought unto himself, *Is not this my wife? And yet how can this be she, I having the keys of the Tower my self in keeping? and so all the time of Dinner the King sat striving and debating thus within himself: But Dinner being ended, he willed the Knight that forthwith he would take up the table, he having some urgent occasions that moved him thereunto; for he was great in thought, and sore troubled in his mind. Whereupon the Knight answered, and said, My Lord, what is the reason you are so melancholy and sad? what is it that*



discontenteth you, be not much troubled in your mind: And if it please you, we shall make you some pleasant sport, and solace. And the Gentlewoman said, my beloved Lord, if it shall please you with us to abide, we shall make you all the pleasure and delight that this place can afford, in such sort that if your Queen herself were here shee could not give you more content. Whereupon the king began to be very angry and said unto him, Take away the Table for I may no longer here abide untill that I have resolved my mind. Then the knight obeyed the commandement of the king, and instantly took up the Table, giving thanks unto them all, but especially unto the king his most Soberaign Lord and Master: Now the king he departed from the knights house, and went with all hast that might be, unto the Castle, intending to see whether that his Queen were therein, or not: But in the meantime the Queen went in at her privy doore and as soon as she came therein, stripped off her uppermost Vesture, and then put her self into the same habit, which the king did leave her in. Now when the king had entred therein, he found the Queen in the same clothing, that he had left her in before; and seeing all things fell out contrary to his expectation, he then did embrace her, and most lovingly kissed her, and said unto her, This day have I eaten with my knight,



Knight, and with his beloved Lady, who hath  
 come out of her country, unto this my Court  
 to find him out, who being together met, and  
 he overmuch joyed in the sight of her, did pre-  
 sently ordain a great Feast to be provided,  
 and humbly did intreat me to do him so much  
 Grace, as that I would accompany him at his  
 Feast: Whereunto I answered, that for the  
 love I did bear him, I would do him that ho-  
 nor, and much more, if he would request me.  
 Whom I having beheld, and thee seeming un-  
 to me so fair, that since I was born, unto  
 this day, mine eyes have not seen in all the  
 world, one so like as she is to you, insomuch  
 that at the dinner time I was so much troubled  
 with many matters, that I could hardly endure  
 unto the end of the Feast, but that incontinen-  
 tly I must come home to see whether you were  
 here or there. When the Queen answered, and  
 said unto him, O mighty king, wherefore doe  
 you so much mistrust me, having so oftentimes  
 found the contrary? Do you not know (yea  
 right well) that this Tower is so fast, strong,  
 and invincible, as that no man can enter in,  
 nor out, without your knowledge: for you have  
 alwaies the keeping of the keyes, and will not  
 trust any man therewith; how were it then  
 possible that I should be there? Sometimes  
 you shall find one man to be like another; you  
 remember of late how you did mistake the  
 knights

## The seven wise

Knights Ring, imagined it to be the Ring  
 which you gave me, and have you yet more ar-  
 guments of suspicion against me? Was it not  
 sufficient for you to debarre me of my liberty  
 for these many years, but that you must needs  
 be jealous of me besides? I tell thee, O noble  
 King, that if you do not forsake this your sea-  
 lousie, and also release me out of this place of  
 imprisonment, that before some few days be  
 expired, I will end my days herein: for I had  
 rather live as a servant at liberty; than now  
 for to be a Queen, and to live herein as a Pri-  
 soner. Then the King answered, and said unto  
 her, All this that you have related is true, for  
 which cause I acknowledge my self to be guilt-  
 ty of all these accusations; wherefore have pa-  
 tience but for some few days, and as sure as I  
 reign King of this Country and Castle, I will  
 set you at liberty, and so he lovingly embraced  
 her with a kiss, and then returned to his own  
 Lodgings. Now he had not rested in his Lod-  
 ging above two days, before the Knight came  
 unto the Court, and said unto the King, O my  
 honourable Lord, I have of long time served  
 your Highnesse, and now it is time that I  
 return again into my own Country, and  
 for all the Service that I have done unto your  
 honour, I desire that you would doe but this  
 one thing for me, What is, What you my noble  
 Lord would doe me but this one favour before  
 my

my departure hence, which is, to give to me  
before the Priest with your own hand, in the  
face of the Church, my beloved Lady whom  
I intended to wed, who hath followed me out  
of far Countries for the love of me, and whom  
I shall bring thither again, as my lawfull and  
true wife, the which thing will be unto me  
great wealth and honour, when I shall come  
unto my own Country. The King answered,  
and said unto him, What petition & much more  
than that (if you will desire it of me) will I  
gladly doe and fulfill. Then the Knight pre-  
sented the day of their Marriage, at which day the  
good King came to the Church, being hono-  
rably attended. The Priest he was ready, and  
stood adorned with his Vestments, for to so-  
lemnize the Matrimonie. The Knight having  
apparelled the Queen in his own House, after  
the manner of his own Country, and had or-  
dained two Knights for to lead her unto the  
Church, and they believed that it had been his  
Paramour. And when they were come into  
the face of the Church, the Priest said, Who  
shall give this Woman to this Knight? Then  
the King said, I shall give her unto my own  
Knight, and took the Lady by the hand, & said  
unto her, O good Woman, you are much like  
unto my Queen, and therefore my love is to  
you the greater and also because you shall be  
wedded unto this Knight whom I affect above  
all

## The seven wise

all other men, and he shall be of my house: and so he put the Queens hand into the knights hand; and then the Priest after the order of the ceremonies of the Church bound them, and wedded them together in the true & faithfull wedlock.

And when all these Rites were finished and done, the Knight spake unto the King, and said O noble King, the Ship that I intend to goe in towards my Country, is now furnished very fitting for my Journey, and now is ready for to sail away; wherefore I humbly beseech your most noble Grace, that it will please you for to accompany my beloved Wife thereunto, and that you will aduertise and admonish her to love me, and that she should have me in favour above all other creatures living, and so much the rather for your good exhortation and counsell thereunto. Then the King with a great company of his followers ( besides others ) went with them, and did accompany them unto the Ship; for whose departure to the Ship, many of them were exceeding sorrowfull and heauy. Then the King began to say unto the Queen, My most dear friend, hearken now well nnto my Councell, and see that you follow it, for it shall be to your profit; My much honoured and beloved Knight hath now wedded and done to you all the worship and honour that in him is wherefore look that you love, honour, and obey him above all earth:



## Masters.

earthly Creatures, as God hath commanded,  
 and that you be unto him true and constant in  
 all your dealings: And as soon as this speech  
 was ended, he delivered her unto the Knight  
 saying, My blessing go with you both, and  
 our Lord keep and conduct you in safety unto  
 your own Country. Then the Knight and  
 the Queen bowed and inclined their heads,  
 down to the king, and gave him thanks for  
 all those courtesies and kindneses that he had  
 done for them; and having so done they com-  
 mitted him to the Almighty, and entered into  
 the Ship, and the Mariners hoisted up their  
 sayles, and sayled forth before the Wind, so  
 that within a short space the King had lost the  
 sight of the Ship: and from thence he went  
 hastily unto the Castle, and being thither come,  
 he presently went to seek for his Queen, and  
 when he could not find her, he was then mo-  
 ved in all the parts of his Body, and sought all  
 about the Tower; he searched so long, untill  
 at last he found out the hole of the secret way  
 that the Knight had caused to be made, and as  
 he saw that, he wept bitterly crying out, and  
 said, Alas, alas, this Knight in whom I had  
 so great confidence and trust, hath robbed me  
 and hath taken away my wife! Was not I  
 a fool, that I gave more faith unto the words,  
 of a Knight, than I did to mine own eyes?  
 Then spake the Empress, and said, My Lord  
 have



## The seven wise

have you understood what I have said? The Emperour said, Well in the best wise, that may be. Then answered the Emperesse, and said unto him, Remember how that he trusted the Knight, and yet the Knight deceived him: In the like manner you will put your trust and confidence in the Seven wise Masters, and they labour for to destroy me that am your Wife, and you give more credit to their words, than you do unto your own eyes; for you have well seen how your ungracious Sonne hath rent and scratched me, whereof yet I bear and have his tokens and marks about me, as you may plainly see and also you know right wel, how that your accursed Son hath ashamed me, and you mark not how they defend him in this their folly and extream falsehood: therefore it is to be feared, that it will happen unto you, worse than it did to a King of whom I have spoken unto you already. The Emperour replied, I will beleefe mine own eyes before that I will give any credence to their words, & therefore I say unto you. To morrow I shall do you justice upon my Sonne. The next day the Emperour commanded that his Sonne should be brought before him, which thing being done according to his desire, he then commanded that his Sonne should be led unto the place of execution, and there to suffer death according to the Law. Then there began to a-

## Masters.

rise a great noise, and much bewailing amongst the common people, for the death of the Emperours onely Sonne. At the last, when the Seventh Master heard and perceived that, he ran immediately unto the Officers which were leading him to the Gallows, and said unto them, My dearly beloved friends, I pray you not to make over-much haste, but stay your hands yet a while, for I think this day (with the gracious help and assistance of Almighty God) to save and deliver him from all perils and dangers: and from thence the Master hastened him towards the Emperours Pallace, and there he did him reverence according to his accustomed duty: But the Emperour with great wrath and indignation against him, made him this answer; Nevermore have you any joy nor comfort in this world, for that you have sent my Sonne home both untaught and dumb, whom I delivered unto you well speaking, for which cause you shall all be put to death with him. The Master answered, and said unto him, O most noble Emperour, the time is not long betwixt this and to morrow noon: then (by the grace of God) you shall hear him speak, and that both wisely and discretely, and unto you he shall declare the truth of all things, and that I will promise you he will perform to the full, upon pain of my life, if you will spare him so long time: if you find it not so, then take my  
life

## The seven Wise.

life, and the lives of us all. Then said the Emperoz, If I might but hear my Son speak, it would geve me sufficient contentment, and I would not desire longer for to live. Then answered the Master and said unto him again, All this, and moze, you shall both hear and see, and confess it to be true, if you will but abide this little time, and then shall this dissention be onely known, and the strife that hath been betwixt us and the Emperesse, will clearly be decided. And if that you doe not call again that noble Prince, your Sonne, but suffer him to be put to death through the words of your most ungodly and wicked wife, I tell you of a truth, that it shall happen worse to you, than it did to a Knight that died for a little blood that he saw his Wife to bleed, to whom afterwards she was most unnaturall. Then said the Emperoz, That example would I fain hear. Then said the Master let your Son be called again, and I shall tell you so notable an example, that during your life you may beware of the untruth and unstedfastness of women. Then the Emperoz said, I shall go call my Sonne back again, upon condition that to morrow I shall hear my Son speak, as you have promised me. The Master said, Do that, my Lord, for it shall so be; and began to tell, as hereafter followeth.

## The Example of the seventh Master.



**T**here was a Knight that had a fair young  
 Wife, whom he loved intirely, insomuch  
 that he could not be out of her sight. It hap-  
 pened on a time, that they played together at Chess  
 & the Knight by chance held a Knife in his hand,  
 and she playing fortunied to smite her hand on  
 the Knife, that a little blood began to appear.  
 When the Knight saw that his Wife bled, he  
 sorrowed much, and was sore afraid of his  
 Wife, that he fell to the ground in a swoond:  
 his Wife seeing that, cast cold Water upon his  
 Face, insomuch that he came a little again to  
 himself, and said lightly, Call the Curate with  
 holy Sacrament; for I must die, for the blood



## The seven wise

that I have seen come out of your Finger, hath smitten death to my heart: then the Priest came and comforted him, and administred the Sacrament unto him, and anon after he died without any tarrying; for whose death, there was made great sorrow and bewaylings, and especially by his Wife: And after that the obsequies were finished and done accordingly, she went and lay upon the Grave, and there made great sorrow and lamentation, and said, she would never depart from thence, but as a Turtle Dove she would for the love of her Husband there abide, and die: then went her Friends and Neighbours unto her, and said, What availeth this for his Soul, to live here weeping untill you die: It is better that you goe home to your house, and there give almes to the poor, for the love of God, and that shall moze avail your Soul, than in this place to abide. To whom she answered, I pray you hold your peace, you are evil Counsellors, consider ye not how I am from him parted and separated by death, for a little blood that he saw come out of my Hand or Finger: and therefore I shall never from hence depart.

Her Friends hearing that, made her a little House or Lodging nigh unto the Grave, and put therein all things that to her were necessary. went their ways, thinking that within a while she would be weary to be alone, and so desolate



## Masters.

from all company, that thereby she would desire again the company of the People.

In the City there was then a Law, that if a trespasser or offender against the Law were hanged, the Sheriff all the night should watch and keep the dead body, armed: and if it happened that the body of him hanged were stolen away, the Sheriff should lose all his Lands and his life at the Kings pleasure. It happened soon after that the Knight was dead, a man should be hanged for trespassse that he had done, so that the Sheriff according to the Law of the Land, all that night watched by the Gallows, that was not far from the City, and the Church-yard was not farre from the same: then began the Sheriff to be so cold, that he could not possibly endure it, but was even ready to dye with cold, except that he might speedily warm him, it was so extream cold, and so great a Frost; and by chance he beholding from thence about him, and spying a fire in the Church-yard hastened him, and came therto, and when he was come near unto it, he called and knocked at the little House: Then the Woman spake and said, Who is that who at this time knocketh at the house of this sorrowfull Woman? He answered, I am the Sheriff that hath endured much cold, that I am ready to freeze to death, unlesse without delay ye let me in to warm my self: She said unto him, I

fear.

## The seven wise

fear that if I let you in, ye should shew me such words, that shall cause me to be more heavy. Then he said, I promise unto you, that I shall say no words to your displeasure: then she let him in, and when he had sitten a while by the fire; and was well warmed, he said unto her, O fair Woman, with your licence would I fain speak but one word with you: She answered him, Sir, say what it pleaseth you: then he said, O Lady, you be a fair Gentlewoman, rich and young, were it not better, and more convenient for you to dwell at home at your House, and to give Almes, then to wast and consume your self here with weeping and crying: She said, Sir Knight, had I known this befoze, you had not come herein: for I say to you, as I have said to others oftentimes, You know well that my Husband loved me too well, that for a little blood that he saw me to bleed out of one of my fingers, he is dead, wherefoze I will here die for the love of him: And as the Knight heard this, he took his leave, and went again unto the Gallows. And when he was come thither, and saw that the Theef that he left there hanging, was stolen and carried away, he began to wax heavy, and fell for sorrow, and said, wo is me, what shall I do: for I have lost my life, and all my goods, and he going up and down thus full of sorrow, and knew not what way to turn himself

self, at the last he bethought himself to goe to the desolate Lady, and shew unto her the heavinesse of his heart, to wit if she could give him any good counsell And when he was come thither, he called, and she asked him the cause of his knocking: then he said, Madam, I am the Sherifff that was right now with you, and I would faine shew unto you the secrets of my heart, therefore I pray you for the love of God open the dooz: and he went in, and said to her, O most virtuous Lady, I am now come to have your Counsell and advice, for you know well the Lawes of the Land are, that whensoever any man is hanged and stolen from off the Gallows, then the Sherifffs Life and Goods be in the Kings hands. Now it happened in the time that I was here with you, and warned me, the Theef is stolen from the Gallows; therefore I pray fair Lady, for the love of God, give me your best advice, what is best to doe; She answered, I have compassion upon you, for by the Law you have lost your life and goods to the King, Do now after my counsel, and ye shall neither lose life nor goods: he answered, Therefore I am to you greatly bound, hoping to have good comfort: she said, Will you then promise to take me to your Wife: The Knight answered, Would God that you were indeed minded: but I fear lest you should disdain so much to humble you unto me, that

## The seven wise

I am so poore a Knight: she said, I give you my will thereto, and he gave her again his will and consented to be her Knight during all his life. Then said she, You know well that such a day my Lord was buried, which for the love of me died: take him out of the Sepulchre, and goe and hang him up in stead of the Thiefe. The Knight answered her, Lady, your Counsel is very good. Then went they together, and opened the Sepulchre and drew him out. The Knight said unto the Lady, How shall we now doe, because ere the Thiefe was taken and hanged, two of his upper teeth were smitten out of his head: and I greatly fear me, if that were perceived, I should die the death. Then the Lady said unto him, Take a Stone and strike out two of his teeth: and the Knight answered, Madam, that may I not doe; for while he lived, he was my trusty and well beloved Friend, and it should be to me greater rebuke, if I should consent to do so disloyal a deed unto his body, being dead: she answered, For your love shall I doe it; and presently took a Stone, and smote out two of his teeth, and said to the Sheriff, Take him and hang him upon the Gallowes like to the Thief. And the Knight said, I fear me to do it; for the Thief in taking him, was wounded upon his head, and he lacked both his Ears. O Madam, God forbid that I doe so to the dead body



# Masters.

that I loved so well in his life. Then said she, Give me your Sword, and I shall for the love of you doe it; and so took the Sword and smote a manly stroke upon the dead mans forehead, and cut off both his Eares; and when she had thus done, she said, Now take and hang him, without company: and then the Knight answered, Yet I fear to hang him, for the Theef wanted both his Stones, and if that he were searched and found without, all our labour were in vain: Then said she, I never saw a man so fearfull, seeing the matter so clear and sure: take a Knife, and cut off his Stones. And he answered, That may not I doe in any wise, and therefore I pray you spare me, for you know well what a man is without his Stones. She said, For the love of you I shall do it, and took the Knife in her hand, and cut off her Husbands Stones, and said to him, Now take the Churl thus disfigured, & hang him up without dread: and they went both together, and hung the body upon the Gallows, and so was the Sheriff delivered of the Kings anger. Then said the Lady, Now ye be quit of all your Dangers, and delivered from all Sorrows and Dangers by my Counsel, therefore I desire you (according to your promise) that ye wed me in the Face of the Church: The Knight said, I have made a vow that I will never wed other so long as you live, which I shall perform. And then he  
said.



## The seven wise

said, O thou most shamefull and worst Woman  
of all Women, who would take thee to be his  
Wife: An honorable and loving Knight was  
thy Husband, who for a little blood that he  
saw issue out of thy Finger, died. Now hast  
thou smitten out two of his Teeth, thou hast cut  
off his Ears, & his Stones, and thou hast made  
him a great wound in his Head; What Dr.  
will would Marry thee: And therefore thou  
shalt never shame good men more, I will rid  
thee of thy life; and so he drew out his Sword,  
& with one stroke he smote off her Head. Then  
the Master said unto the Emperor, my Lord,  
have you understood what I have said: and he  
answered, Right well. Amongst all women this  
was the worst, and the Knight rewarded her ac-  
cordingly, so that she should no more do men  
shame: and the Emperour said moreover, O my  
good Master, might I but once hear my Son  
speak, I should have no care of my self. Then  
said the Master, To morrow you shall hear him  
speak before you, and he shall shew the troth of  
fall the variances betwixt us and the Empress,  
as I hope; and so took his leave of the Em-  
peror, and departed.

How *Dioclesian* the Emperors Son complained  
on the Empress; and how he excused  
himself of her complaint.

**A**nd after that, all the Masters assembled  
together, and took counsel how and in what  
manner

manner they should bring the Child out of Prison; and lead him to the Palace: and so they went to the Child whereas he lay in Prison, before mid-day, his will and counsell for to hear: To whom the Child said, What you will, that shall please me; but in no wise busie your selves how I shall answer, or what I shall say; for with joy I shall answer all things that shall be demanded of me. When the seven wise Masters heard that, they were exceeding joyfull and glad, and they cloathed him in Purple, and in cloath of Gold, and two of the said Masters went before him, and one upon his right hand; another upon his left hand, and the other three followed after him; and before them all went twelve men with Instruments of Musick, who brought him with great honour and melody to the Palace; and when the Emperour heard all this Melody, he demanded what it was: Then it was told him by standers by, saying, Mighty Emperour, it is your Son which cometh before you, and before all your Lords, to speak and excuse himself of all that is laid unto his charge. The Emperour said, That is good tidings, if I might hear my Son speak. And when the Child was come into the Palace, he rode to his Father, and said unto him, Wail my most dear, and most royall Father.

## The seven wise



And when the Emperoz heard the voice of his Sonne Dioclesian, he was so glad, that for ioy he fell down to the earth, but his Sonne hastened to take up the Emperoz his Father again, and when he was come to himself, then began his Sonne to declare and open all the whole matter unto his Father: and then there came so great a Multitude of People into the Palace to hear the Child speak, and the ioy and noise of them were so great, that the Child could not possibly be heard. The Emperoz considering that, caused Money to be thrown into the Streets, that the People therewith should be busied and aboied out of the Palace, that thereby they might the better hear the Child speak; but the Folk took no regard

## Masters.

at all after the Money which was cast abroad. And when the Emperoz perceived that, presently he commanded silence upon pain of their lives: And when they were all still, then the Child began to speak, as followeth: O most dear Father, before that I speak any thing, I intreat and beseech you, that the Empress with all her Chamber-maidens may come and be present: and so the Emperoz commanded the Empress, with all her Chamber-maidens to come without delay. The Emperesse hearing that (being in great fear) came with all her Maidens, and the Child commanded them to stand before all the People in a row, that he might see them. Then said the Child, Sir, lift up your eyes and behold the Chamber-maid that standeth there in the green clothing, whom you know the Empress loveth best above all other; Command her to be unclothed unto her naked body, before us all, and see what she is, The Emperoz said, My dear Sonne, that would shame us all, to have a woman to stand naked before us: He said, If it be a woman, it is my shame; and if not, let the shame abide in her. When that she was unclothed, they all said it was a man, and so it appeared, whereat they greatly wondered.

The

## The seven wise!

The Declaration of the Complaint of the Emperors Son on the Empress.

**T**hen said the Son unto his Father, Behold this Ribauld hath many a night lain with your Wife in your Chamber in adultery, and hath defiled your Bed, and him the Empress loveth above all others, the which thing you did not know

When that the Emperoz had seen and beheld these things, he with great indignation and wrath gave Commandment that both the Empress and the Ribauld should be burnt: but the Sonne answered and said, My Lord and Father, Make no haste to give iudgement before I have reprobred her of these grieuous slanders that she did thus falsly accuse me of, and that I have declared, how unjussly she hath complained of me, and sought by all means how she might take my Life from me. Then said the Emperoz, My dear Sonne, I commit all the Iudgement into your hands. The Sonne answered and said, If she be found false and a lier, then the Law shall give sentence against her; But my Loyal Father, when you sent after me, at her earnest suit and request, then I with my Masters beheld the Stars in the Firmament, by which I might perceive, that if I should have spoken any Words unto you, or any other living Creature, within the space of seven dayes, I should have died a



most shamefull death, and for that cause only  
 I did forbear to speak untill this present.  
 And whereas the Empress most unjustly hath  
 accused me, that I should have oppressed and  
 ravished her, therein I say she lieth falsly; for  
 she most adulterously would have provoked me,  
 for to defile the Bed of my most gracious Lord  
 and Father the Emperoz. And when she  
 in no wise could bring me thereto, then she  
 took a Pen, Ink, and Paper, and bad me  
 write the cause wherefore I would not yeeld  
 unto that which she so earnestly desired: And  
 when that I had written the cause wherefore  
 I would not commit such a great and abomina-  
 ble sin, and how that I would not my Fathers  
 Orchard defile. Then began she to tear her  
 clothes, and scratch her visage, that it gushed  
 forth with blood, and cried with a loud voice,  
 and said, This my Son (having a mind full  
 of lust) would have wronged your Princely  
 Bed, and I resisting his lustfull mind, most in-  
 humanely hath he torn my flesh. When the  
 Emperoz heard this, he beheld her with a fall  
 countenance, and said unto her in this manner;  
 O thou wretched Woman, was it not sufficient  
 to fulfil thy foul and lecherous appetite, thou  
 and thy Ribauld, but wouldst also have made my  
 Sonne? Then fell the Empress to the Empe-  
 rozs feet, and she cried unto him for mercy,  
 The Emperoz said, O thou cursed and most  
 unhappy

## The seven wife

unhappy Woman, thou askest forgiveness, and thou art worthy none to have, for thou hast deserved to die in three manner of wayes. The First is, that thou hast committed Adultery; The second is, that thou most lasciviously hast provoked and stirred up my Sonne, unto most wicked and abominable Sinne, and hast imputed and laid the Crime falsly & unjustly upon him: And the Third and last is, that thou hast every day enticed and provoked me with thy false tales to put my Son to Death: and therefore the Law shall have his course against thee, and shall condemn thee unto death, according as thou hast deserved.

Then answered his Sonne, and said, Most noble Father, you know well that for the reasons that she hath laid upon me, I was dayly led unto hanging; But my Masters with the help of God have delivered me. O my most honorable Lord and Father, it was said unto you by the Emperesse, that I would also by the help of my Masters depose you out of your Empire, and that I did labour by all means possible to destroy you, and to sit my self in your Kingdom: would you not then have much grieved and sorrowed: have you not the whole command and government of this your Kingdom: Wherefore then should I not use all the knowledge and skill I have to help you, my most honored Father, rather than any man-  
ner

ner of way for to destroy you? And now seeing that from you I have my living, I will repute you for my Sovereign Lord and Father, during the Term of my Life, and I will not in any manner deprive you of your Honour, but I will labour and busie my self about the governing of the same, and all your Commandments I shall fulfill in every thing: But it is in the same manner as the Father that cast his Sonne into the Sea for to drown him, because he said that he should live to see him for to be a greater Lord than his Father was, and yet the Sonne by the Providence of God was saved; and he became a greater Lord than his Father, and yet was no hinderance to him, but rather profited him much; also you see and remember that my life and carriage shall never hinder you, but it shall be to your joy and comfort. Then said the Emperour, Blessed be the Almighty God and the hour that ever I begat thee, and desired to have such a Son, that I find so wise and expert in all good things: tell me an Example, by the which we may perfectly understand thy wisdom, and that my heart may the better enjoy thee.

Then said the Sonne, My honourable Father, Command first silence to be made of your People, that I be not letted in my words till that I have done: And when that is ended, give Sentence with Righteousnesse of the Law upon

## The Ieuē Wife.

upon me, and upon the Emperess. Then commanded the Emperour silence, and the Child began to tell in ample manner, as hereafter followeth.

### The example of *Dioclesian*, the Emperours Son

**T**here was a King which had but one Son, that he loved right dear in the beginning, as ye now all only have loved me: whom he delivered unto a Master that dwelt in a far country, for to be brought up in learning and knowledge. This Child as he waxed in years, so he encreased in wisdom and knowledge, and profited himself very much therein. And when he had been with his Master seven years, his Father desired to see him, and sent Letters unto him, that he should come again into his Country, and visit his Friends, in like sort as you have sent for me. The Child was obedient to his Father, and came at his Commandment: for whose coming, he did exceedingly joy, for that he was grown as well in comeliness of body, as also in doctrine and learning, and to every man he appeared pleasant and gentle.



It happened upon a day, that the Father & the Mother sitting at the Table, and the Child served them, a Nightingale came flying before the Window, whereas they sat, and began to sing sweetly, that they marvelled: and the Knight said, O how sweetly this Bird singeth! well were he that could understand his Song, and could shew the interpretation thereof, Then said the Son, My worshipfull Father, the Song of this Nightingale I could well declare, but I fear your displeasure. The Father said, Say boldly my Sonne the interpretation of the Bird, and then ye shall prove whether I shall be angry or not; but I shall mark well the reason of mine anger: And when the Son heard that, he said, The Nigh-



## The seven wise

king hath said in his song, that I shall become a great Lord, and I shall be worshipped and honored of all Men, and namely of my Father: the which shall bring me water to wash my hands, and my Mother shall hold the Towell. The Father said, Thou shalt never see the day such service of us to have, nor none such dignity shall follow thee; and in great madness & woodnesse he took his Son upon his shoulder, and ran to the Sea, and cast him in, & said, By there the interpreter of the Birds song. The Child could swim, and swimmied to a Land, where he was four days without Meate or Drink: the fifth day there came a Ship sayling, & as the Child saw that, he called to the Ship-men, and said, For the love of God deliver me from the peril of death. The Ship-men saw that it was a fair young man, and they had compassion on him, and went with the Boat to fetch him aboard, and carried him into a fair Country, and sold him there to a Duke. The Child grew very proper and fair, and the Duke loved him much, & had him greatly in favour.

And upon a time the King of that Realm did call a generall assembly of all the great Lords and Noble-men, within the Realm together, for to sit in Councell. This Duke then prepared and ordained him to go to the said Councell, and gave great regard unto the will and wisdom of the Child, and therefore took the

## Masters.

Child with him, & when they were all gathered and assembled before the King & his counsell; my well beloved Lords and Friends; said the King, will you know the cause wherefore I have assembled you together? They answered and said, We all are (Soveraign Lord) at your commandment. Then said the King, It is a secret matter that I shall shew you: If that any man can open it, & declare what it signifieth, I swear & promise unto him by my Crown, that I will give unto him mine onely Daughter in Marriage, and he shall be my Fellow in my Realm, so long as life doth last; and after my death, he shall have & posses all my whole Kingdom: & the mystery of the Counsell is this.

Three Ravens follow me still wheresoever that I go, they leave me not, but cry out with such horrible voyces, that the pain is grievous and wearisome for me to hear them, and much more to behold their looks: wherefore if there be any man, which knoweth the cause of this their earnest following of me, and can tell or shew what they mean by their crying, and avoid them away from me, without doubt I shall fulfill this promise that I have made. And as the King had thus said, there was none found in all the Counsell that understood the cause or could remove or put away the Ravens. Then answered the Child, and said unto the Duke, My Lord, Think you that the

## The seven wife

King will perform what he hath promised : and will you that I giue the King knowledge of you, what you can do : then the Child said, I will my life set in pledge, and I shall perform and make it good what I have said. When the Duke heard that, he went to the King, and said, My Lord and King, here is a young man right cunning and wise, and he doth promise for to fullfill and satisfie in all things what you shall ask and desire touching these Ravens, if you will fullfil what you have promised. The King swore by the Crown of his Kingdome, That which I have promised, all things shall be fulfilled. When he brought the Child before the King, and when the King had beheld him, he spake unto him after this manner : O fair Child, can you give answer to this my Question : The Child answered, and said, Yea my Lord, & that in the best manner. For my Question is, Wherefore that the Ravens follow you, and horribly call upon you : to which I answer : Upon a time it happened, that there were two Ravens, a Male and a Female, that had brought out between them a third Raven, and in that place there was such a great Famine and Scarcity of all manner of Food for the preservation of their lives, in such sort that Men, Beasts, and Fowls died, and perished for want. Now the third Raven was at that time very young, and not able to flye :

broad to get her living : the Female she left it, seeking whereby she might best get her own living, and to shew that she did nothing regard her young one, she came no more to the Nest : The Male Raven, seeing that, with great penury and labour fed the young Raven till he was able to flye. And now when this great Dearth was past and gone, then the Female Raven returned home again to the young Raven, and would hold fellowship and company with him ; But the Male Raven seeing that, he would have driven her away, saying thus, That she in his great misery and necessity left him and his company, and therefore now he would have no company nor fellowship with her. She alleadged and said, that she had in his hatching great labour and sorrow, and suffered much penury, and for that cause she would rather enjoy his company than the Male Raven. For this cause my Sovereign Lord they follow you, asking true judgement which of them both shall have company with the young Raven: and this is the cause of this horrible clamor and noise that they make dayly unto you.

But my honoured Lord, had you thereupon a right wise sentence given, you shall never more see them, or be troubled with their crying. Then answered the King, and said, Because that the Female hath left and forsaken the young Raven in his most necessity, it tran-



beth with reason and justice, that she should not follow him, but be without his fellowship : and where she saith, that in the hatching and byring forth of him she had great pain and travell: that helpeth not, for her pain was turned into joy, as soon as she saw the young Raven in the world But in regard that the Male is the cause of production and generation of every Beast of the Earth, & every Fowl of the Aire, & also because the young Raven in his necessity was sustained & fed unto the recovery & nourishing of his body by the Male: therefore I conclude both for judgement and sentence definitive, that the young Raven: shall abide, and keep company with the Male, and not with the Female:-



And when the Ravens heard that sentence,  
with



with great noise and cry, they flew up into the Aire, and were no more seen nor found in all that Region.

When this was done, the King demanded of the young Man, what his name was: He answered, and said, I am called Alexander. Then said the King, I will that you shall grant me one request, which is, that from henceforth you shall name and take me, & none other, for your Father: for you shall have my Daughter to Wife, and you shall have the whole Government and possession of this my Realm. This young Alexander abode, and dwelled still there with the King, and every man did exceedingly love and favor him, for he began to haunt Jests and Tourneys, wherein at all times he did win the Prize before all other that were in Egypt, so that his peer or like was not to be found; neither was there so hard or obscure a question put to him, but that he could make known the true Sence, and meaning thereof. At that time there was an Emperour whose name was Tyrus, that excelled in gentleness, courtesie, and curiosity, all other Emperours, Kings and Princes, in the whole world, inso-much that such fame and noise flew and ran over the World of it, that whatsoever he was that would learn and profit in cunning, manners, or behaviour, he should go to that Emperours Court. And when Alexander heard

therfore he said to the King, My most honorable Lord & Father, you know well that the world is full of the fame of the Emperour, that it is very delectable and pleasant to abide and dwell in his court: wherfore, if it please you, my renowned Lord and Father, I would very gladly go to his court, to the intent that I may obtain more wisdom, and grow prompter in manners and behaviour then now I am. Whereupon answered the King, It pleaseth me right well; but I would that you take with you plenty of Gold & Silver, and other necessities, so much that you mine honour there may save, and that you may have also that which is to you most requisite, & necessary. And also it seemeth unto me very expedient, that before your departing, you should Marry my Daughter.

Then answered Alexander, Will it please you my Lord to spare me at this time, and at my coming home again I shall Wed her with all honour, as unto her appertaineth. The King answered, Since that it is your will to go unto the Emperours Court, I licence it, and thereunto I give my consent, Then Alexander did take his leave of the King, and took with him abundance of Treasure, & then he went to the Emperours Court: and when he was come with many Followers he went before the Emperour, and fell upon his knees, and saluted him and did him reverence.

## Masters?

The Emperour rose up from his Seat Imperiall, and kissed him, and asked of him whence, and what he was, and wherefore he was come: he answered, and said, I am Son and Heir of the King of Egypt, and am come to doe service to your most high Majesty, if it please you to accept of me. The Emperour said that he was right heartily welcome, and committed him to his Steward and made him his Carver. The Steward ordained him a fair Chamber, & provided for him all things that were necessary to the same; & Alexander behaved himself so well, that in a short time he was beloved of all people.

Not long after that, came the Kings Son of France to doe Service unto the Emperour, and to learn good qualities, and fair and comely behaviour, him the Emperour received honourably, and demanded his name, and of what kindred he was come: He answered, I am Sonne to the King of France, and I have to name Lodowick your Servant: Then said the Emperour, I have made Alexander my Carver, and you shall be my Cup-bearer: that alwaies ye shall do service at my Table, & commanded the Steward to assign him a Lodging, whom he placed with Alexander in his Chamber, These two Gentlemen were so like in stature, and visage, and Condition, that hard the one might be discerned or known from the other, but that Alexander was more cunning in all his

### The seven wife

his deeds than was Lodowick, for he was a Feminine man, and shame face-fac'd: and these young men well loved together.

The Emperour had one only Daughter named Florentine, she was right fair and gracious, and should be his Heir; whom he loved intirely: she had a Court by her self, and Servants to her assigned; to her the Emperour every day was accustomed to send from his Table of his Dainties, in token of love, by Alexander: insomuch that the Daughter began to have him marvailously in her favour, because of his wisdome and comely behaviour. It happened upon a day, Alexander at meat-time had such business, that he served not at the Table, nor none other gave attendance for him in his room: Lodowick perceiving that, served in his room; and as soon as he had served the Emperour, in his last service upon his Knees, The Emperour commanded him to bear a Dish to his Daughter, as he was wont to do: thinking that he was Alexander. Then took Lodowick the Dish, and wen to the Pallace of the Emperours Daughter, and saluted her with great reverence, and set the meat before her: untill that time he had not seen her. She perceiv'd anon that it was not Alexander, and said to him on this manner, What is your name, and whose Son are you? He answered to her, and said, Madam, I am the Kings Son of



of France, and my name is Lodowick: she said,  
I thank you for your labor; then took his leave  
and departed: in the mean time came Alex-  
ander to the Table, & they fulfilled their service.

The Dinner being done, anon Lodowick  
went to the Bed soze sick, and Alexander per-  
ceiving that, went to his chamber and said unto  
him, O my most best beloved Friend and Fel-  
low Lodowick, how is it with you, and what  
is the cause of your infirmity? He answered  
him and said, The cause I know not, but I feel  
me soze sick, but I fear me I cannot escape  
the death. Alexander said, the cause of your in-  
firmity and decrease I know well, for to day  
as ye did bear the meat to the Emperors  
Daughter ye held her countenance & beauty so  
ferbently, that your heart was taken and ravi-  
shed with her love. Whereunto he answered,  
O Alexander, all the Physitians in the world  
could not moze truly judge my Sicknes; but  
I fear it will be my death. Then said Alexan-  
der, Be of good comfort, and I wil help you  
unto my power; and so forthwith went to the  
Merchant, and bought with his own money  
a fair Cloth, set with precious Stones, un-  
known to Lodowick. and presented it in his  
behalf unto the Princess. As soon as she be-  
held that, she asked him where he had that cost-  
ly and precious Cloth? And he said, Madam,  
of the Sonne of the most Christian King of  
France



France, who serbeth it unto you for your love: for he having but once beheld your princely face, is grown so sick, that he lieth upon his bed even unto his death; therefore if you suffer him to perish, you shall never recover again your honoꝛ.

Then said she, Good Alexander, would you thus counsell me that I should lose my Virginitie? God defend that, and be you sure Alexander, that for such messages, you shall nevermore win thanks of me, therefore go you out of my sight, and speak no more thereof to me. When Alexander heard that, he did obeyesance, and departed.

The next day Alexander went again to the City, & bought a Chaplet that was twice more in value than the Cloth, and therewith he went to the Princesss Chamber, and gave it to her on the behalf of Lodowick. And when she saw that costly gift, she said unto him in this maner, I marvell of you, that so often you have seen and spoken with me, that you have not so done your own errand in speaking for your self, but for another. Then answered he, O Madam, I have not been so disposed, because my Birth is not to be compared with yours; and also it happened me never such a case as my heart was so wounded: & he that hath a good Fellowship is bound for to do his good and true Fellowship. And therefore now, excellent Princess, of your most abundant pittie have compassion

## Masters.

on him, and make him whole, that you have so sore wounded to Death, that it be not for ever laid unto your cruelty & hardness of heart. She answered him, Go your way, for at this time I will give you no answer thereof; and as he heard that, he took leave and departed.

And the third day he went to the City, and bought a Girdle, that was more value, and costlier than the Chaplet was, and presented it to her on the behalf of Lodowick: and when she saw and beheld that gift so precious, she said unto Alexander, Say to Lodowick that he come to my Chamber about the third hour, in the Night: and he shall find the doore open: & Alexander hearing that, was glad, & went to his fellow, & said, My best beloved fellow, be of good comfort, for I have conquered the Princess to you, and this night I shall bring thee to her chamber. And when that was said, he started up as though he had awakened out of his sleep, and was well revived, and for great joy he became well: the next Night following, Alexander took Lodowick and brought him unto the Chamber of the Lady, with whom he was in felace and joy all night, & from that time forth all her heart was upon him, so that there was but one onely love between them both.

And after that, Lodowick used oftentimes to visit her, so that by process of time it came to the Ears of the Knights and Gentlemen of the Court.

## The seven wise

Court, how that the Emperours Daughter was known by Lodowick, and they conspired among themselves how they might find him, & intrap him therewith, and so for to take him. As Alexander had knowledge thereof, he armed him to withstand them; & when the Knights understood that, they fearing Alexander, suffered his fellowes for to go in peace: Alexander many times put himself in jeopardy for him, he not knowing thereof; but the Princess knew it well.

In short time after that, there came Letters to Alexander, of the death of the King of Egypt, that he should hastily come and receive his Kingdome with honour and joy: and that shewed he even unto the Princess and to Lodowick, and also of his departing: wherefore they were sorrowful and heavy. He said also unto the Emperour, my honourable Lord, please it you to understand, that I have received letters of the death of my Father, wherefore it behooveth me to go & receive the Kingdome, and that you will be pleased to give me leave to depart, & for all the benefits to me done, I offer my self and all my goods: and rather then I should by my going, any way offend or displease you my Lord, I will forsake all my Realm, and all that I have in the world, and abide with you still. Then said the Emperour, know you for certain, that for your departure I am right heavy and sorrowfull, for you were

the best Seruant that was in all my Court: but it becometh not an Emperour to hinder his Seruants from their promotions or advancements, but rather promote them to higher or greater honour. Therefore go you unto our Treasurer, & he shall deliuer you as much gold as you will haue, and in the name of God (and my blessing) go into your Country. And thus Alexander had leaue of the Emperour, and bad him farewell: and they were all sorrowfull for his departure, for he was beloved of all.

Lodowick with the Princess brought him on his way seven Miles at the least: after that, Alexander would not suffer them to go any further. Then fell they both to the ground with great sorrow and heaviness. And Alexander took and lifted him up again from the Ground and comforted him with fair words, and said, O Lodowick, my most best beloved Fellow, I warn you that the secrets being betwixt you and my Lady, you hide and keep them as priuily as you may, and take good heed to all things, for I wot another shall come and be in my stead, that shall enuy you of the labour and grace that you stand in with the Emperour, and day and night shall lay in wait to take you with a fault, and to put you unto rebuke and shame. Then answered Lodowick and said, O Alexander, I shall beware as much as to me is possible: But how shall I doe  
when



## The seven Wise.

When I shall want your company : Therefore one thing I shall desire of you, that you take this Ring of me for a remembrance. Then said he, I shall for the love of you gladly receive your Ring, and yet I shall never without the Ring forget you : and so he committed them both unto God. Then they embraced each other about the Neck, and kissed, so they departed,

Not long after, the Kings Son of Spain, named Guido, was received of the Emperor in the Room and place of Alexander, to whom the Steward assigned Alexanders place & chamber; the which was very sore against the will of Lodowick; but he could not help it.

Guido seeing that Lodowick against his will had him in his fellowship, and he grew envious against him; so Lodowick of a long time for fear of the said Guido, kept him out of the company of the Lady. Nevertheless afterwards, being overcome with her love, sometimes he haunted and went again unto her as he before had done: Guido quickly perceiving the same : waited so long thereon, that he knew the truth, and was therefore certain that the Princess was by Lodowick known, and had accompanied with her.

Upon a time it happened that the Emperor stood in the Hall, and praised Alexander for his gentleness and wisdom. Guido hearing that, said, My Lord, he is not so much worthy to be commended as you imagine, for he hath a long time been a Traytor in your House. Then



Then the Emperour said, Tell me how? Guido said, You have but one only Daughter, the which shall be your Heir, and her Lodowick hath defiled and lien by, through the help of Alexander, & he goeth to her every night as it pleaseth him.

And as soon as the Emperour heard thereof he was sore moved, and began to be angry, and it hapened Lodowick upon the same time to come through the Hall, and as the Emperour saw him he said, What hear I of thee, thou evil and untrue body? If it be found and proved true, thou shalt dye the most shamefull death that can be devised. Lodowick said, My Lord the Emperour, what is the cause? Guido answered, I say, and despoise here before my Lord against thee, that thou hast defiled his onely Daughter, and every night thou goest to her & doest Fornication with her, and with Battell I shall prove and make it good upon thy Body with my Body. Then said Lodowick, I am innocent, and not infected with that crime, and falsely thou dost bely me, & thereupon I hold the Battell and trust to God thy falsehood shall come upon thine own head. Then the Emperour assigned unto them the day of combat. That done, Lodowick went unto the Lady, and shewed her the cause and the day of Battell, by the Emperour assigned, and in what manner Guido had accused him, and said unto her, Now it behoveth me to have your counsel.

## The seven wise

or else I must die, for as you know it hath not a-  
bailed me to have gainsaid the Battell, with-  
out I should have yelded my self guilty: Gui-  
do is strong and hardy, that his like is none  
but Alexander, and I am feeble, and therefore  
if I fight the battle against him I were but a  
dead man; and so you shall abide, rebuke and  
shame. Then said she, follow my counsell in  
that you mistrust your self, go hastily unto my  
Father, and say unto him that ye have receiued  
Letters, whereby you are assured that the King  
your Father is sore sick, and lyeth upon his  
death-bed and desireth to see you, and to speak  
with you in person, and to dispose of his King-  
dome before he depart out of his life: so desire  
him to giue you leaue for the love of your Fa-  
ther, to go visit him, and that he will prolong  
and lengthen the day of battle, that in the  
mean season you may go and come. And when  
you have gotten leaue, as hastily as you can,  
secretly go to King Alexander, and being thi-  
ther come, take him apart and shew him the  
cause of your comming, and require him in this  
your great extremity, that he will help and  
save us.

And when Lodowick had heard that counsel:  
it pleased him well, and he did accordingly:  
And having obtained leaue, and a long day, and  
respite of the Batte prefired and assigned, he  
then departed & took his journey towards the  
Realm

## Masters.

Realm of Egypt, & never stayed day or night,  
till he came into King Alexanders Castle.

And when that King Alexander had understanding of his coming, He was very glad & went to meet him, and received him honourably, & he did wonder much at his coming. Then said Lodowick, O my most dear Lord, & my best beloved friend, my life and my death is in your hands, for as you said to me before, that I should have another fellow, the which should lye in wait to espie me, and to destroy me, without I did look more wisely unto my self; So, as long as I could I did abstain from her till I might no longer abide, but afterwards the Kings Sonne of Spain made watch so long over me, untill he perceived the truth: in the end he accused me unto the Emperour, so that in the eighth day hereafter from this day, I must be ready and prepared for to fight with him, body against body: and as ye know well, he is a very strong and hardy man, and I am weak and feeble, and therefore hath Florentine counselled me, that I should not hide this matter from you, for she knoweth you for a faithfull friend, and that you would not leave us in this great necessity.

Then said Alexander, Is there any body that knoweth of your coming unto me for this matter, more than Florentine: he answered him & said, No creature living, for I took leave of

## The seven wise

the Emperoz to go visit my Father, lying grievously sick. Then Alexander asked of him, What counsel hath Florentine given you now, and in what wise might I help you? He said, O my most constant and faithfull Friend, in this wise she hath counselled me, considering that we be like each other, that you should come and perform the battle with him, and no man should know you but she; and the battle done, I should come again to the Court, and you return back to your own Country. Then he asked him, when the day should be of the Battell: and he said Eight days hence.

Then said Alexander, If I should this one day tarry before I depart hence, then I cannot come by the day prescribed. Whereupon understand what I shall doe; I have bidden all my Subjects, that to morrow they should come to my wedding: and if I should go, then is the day lost, if I go not and do the Battle, then Florentine and you are undone, : what think you is best to be done? When Lodowick did hear that, he fell to the earth, and began to sorrow out of measure, saying, Sorrows and heaviness come suddenly to me on all sides. Then said Alexander unto him, Be of good comfort, for I shall not forsake you in this sort, though I should lose my life, and Kingdome: but hearken what I have thought upon: inasmuch that we are both like one another, so that the one  
of



of us cannot be known from the other, and as for me I am not rightly known here, but that all my Barons & all other my Subjects will take you for me, therefore you shall here abide and tarry, and marry my wife in my stead: and hold the Feasts and Nuptials, and do all things as if I my self were there present, except when as you come to bed with my wife, look that you be there true and faithfull, and I shall without any tarrying, go and take my Horse and ride thither whereas the Battell shall be; and if God give me the victory, that I may overcome vanquish your Enemy, I will come again secretly, and you shall go again unto your best beloved. This done, Alexander bad Lodowick Farewell, and then he took his journey towards the Emperours Court, for to fight and do the Battell with Guido, and Lodowick tarried in Egypt in stead of King Alexander.

And upon the next morning came Lodowick, as though he had been King Alexander, and there solemnly in the Face of the Church, he espoused King Alexanders Wife, and solemnized the Marriage Feast with great royalty of delicates and dainty meats, plenty of all manner of Wines, and divers melodies of Instruments of Musick, and great joy and cheer, for the Noble-men and all other people that were there assembled. And when the night was come, he went to bed with the Queen & laid be-



taken him and her naked sword, whereof she had great wonder, but nothing she said, and so he lay with her every night so long as Alexander was out.

Now King Alexander at the day that was prefixed and set, came unto the Emperour, and said, O most Soberaign Lord, it is so, that I have left my Father very sick, and in great hazard of death, yet nevertheless I am come to perform my promise, and with a full resolution to defend my honour. The Emperour said, You do honourably, and according to the valour of a noble man, and fortune shall favour you (I hope) in your just & righteous quarrell.



And when the Emperours Daughter understood that Alexander was come, anon she sent for

for him, and when he was come to her, she very courteously and kindly embraced him, and with great joy and gladness, she kissed him, and blessed the time that she might see him again, & demanded of him where he had left her faithful friend and lover, Lodowick? Then he declared unto her the whole discourse and circumstance, how he had left him King in his Realm and so he took his leave of her, and went to Lodowicks Chamber, and there was no Creature thought otherwise but that he was Lodowick, except Florentine onely: The next day following, before Alexander went unto the Battel he said unto the Emperour, in the presence of Guido, My most renowned soveraign Lord, Guidobath falsly and unjustly accused me unto your most noble Grace, in saying that I should be of such acquaintance with the Princess, your most vertuous and onely Daughter, which is to the great dishonour of your most noble Person, and hers: whereunto I swear and affirm by the holy Evangelists, that she was never in such manner of wise known by me as he hath alleaged and informed unto you, which I shall prove and make good this day upon his Body, with the aid and help of God,

Then answered Guido, Yet once I say again, and swear by the holy Evangelists, and by all that God hath made, that thou hast had knowledge, and hast defiled the Emperours Daugh-

## The seven wise

ter, and that I will make good upon thy head.

Whereupon they leapt upon their Coursers, and ran so fiercely one at another, with their Spears, that they both brake and splintered in pieces: and then they drew their Swords, and fought so long together, untill at last Alexander with great might and strength, at one stroke, smote off Guidoes head, and sent it unto the Emperors Daughter, whercof she was right glad and bear it unto her Father, and said, Father, behold the Head of him that hath so falsely, defamed you and me.

When the Emperour perceived the victory, anon he sent for Alexander, whom he thought to have been Lodowick, and said unto him, O Lodowick, this day your honor and my Daughters you have saved, you shall stand and be to morrow in my grace and favour, and whatsoever that he be that hereafter shall again defame you; he shall for ever stand in my indignation.

Then answered Alexander and said, God always helpeth and saveth them that put their trust in him, and revengeth the wrong done unto the innocent.

But now most renowned Lord, one thing I do intreat at your hands: At my departure from my father, I left him sore sick, that it will please you to rite me leave to go & see how it standeth with him, and if that he be any thing amended, I shall incontinent come again. Then  
the

the Emperour said That pleaseſt me, but you may in no manner of wiſe leave me; for from henceforth I cannot be without your preſence.

Now Alexander having taken leave of the Emperour, bad him farewell, and withall the ſpeed that he could make, rid back again unto his Realm. Now Lodowick having heard of his return, with much joy he did ride to meet him; and having met together, with great gladneſſe and cheer he friendly received him, and ſaid, O moſt true friend of all friends, tell me how fortune hath favored you in this your journey and buſineſſe, and to what end you have brought it: Then ſaid he, Go to the Emperour & ſerve him as you have done beſore, for I have gotten you more grace and favour at his hands than ever you had in former time: and I have alſo cut off the head of your greateſt enemy & adverſary.

Then ſaid Lodowick, You have not only at this time ſaved my life, but in like manner you have preſerved me heretofore, the which kindneſſe I ſhall never forget, neither as yet I cannot requite it: but God reward you, and ſo he departed, and went again to the Emperours Court, and there was no man that had any knowledge of the abſence of King Alexander, except Lodowick onely.

And when that night was come, he went to Bed to the Queen, and as ſoon as he was laid in Bed, he began ſweetly to embrace her, and  
with



With friendly words he kissed her. Then said  
 she, You haue made this time too long, in that  
 you haue shewed nothing of friendship or love,  
 how may this be? Then said he, wherefore say  
 you that? she said, Every night that I was in  
 my Bed, you haue put betwixt you and me a  
 naked sword, and you haue neuer turned you  
 towards me untill now. And when he heard  
 that, he thought on the truth of his fellow, and  
 said, O my dear Lady, it was not done for any  
 ill will, but for a good probation of love. But  
 she said to her self, that love you shall haue no  
 more, but despight, and I will be reuenged up-  
 on thee.



When there was a knight that she before had  
 a little love and fauour unto, and she beganne  
 for



for to love him more and more, so long till at the last they sought and imagined how they might destroy and slay the King, and therefore they got poyson and poysoned the King, so that if he had not been right strong of complexion, he had died thereof, for it wrought in him so sore, that it caused him to be a most sore and horrible Leaper, as ever was seen upon the earth. The Lords and Noblemen of his said Realm, and the Queen also seeing this, despised him, and said, That it behooveth not a Leaper to raigun over us, for he should not procure nor ingender any fair or clean Heirs, and so he was deposed of his dignitie Royall, and driven out of his Realm.

In the mean time dyed the Emperour of Rome, and Lodowick married his Daughter, and after that, Lodowicks Father died, so that Lodowick raignes both Emperour of Rome, and King of France at once.

When King Alexander heard that, he thought in himself, How my fellow raigneth and ruleth both the Empire of Rowe, and Realm of France; to whom may I go better than unto him, for whom I have many times ventured my life: And upon a night he rose up and made him ready, & took with him his staff & clapper, and went towards the Emperours Country.

And when he was come nigh unto the Gate, he sat down among other poor Lazers, expecting

## The seven wise

praying the giving of Almes: and upon a sudden as the Emperour went out of the Pallace, all the poore Lazars began to ring their Clappers, and the good King Alexander did as the other did, but there was no Almes given him: he tarried so long untill the time that the Emperour was set and served at the Table.

Then went King Alexander unto the Gate, and knocked thereat, & the Porter asked, Who was there? Alexander answered him, I am a poore despised man, & I pray you for the love of God turn not away your sight from my visage, but that you will for the reward of God, do my message unto the Emperour: he asked What is the matter? Alexander said, Go and tell him here is a Lazer that is right horrible ugly to see, the which prayeth him for the love of God, & King Alexander, that he will grant him this day to eat his Almes before him upon the earth in his Hall. The Porter answered I wonder that you dare desire that of my Lord? for why? all the Hall is still full of Lords and Noble-men, and if they should behold you, they would all abhor and forsake their meats; But forasmuch as you have required of me so lamentably for the love of God, I shall go and do your errand, whatsoever hapneth thereof: and so he went forward and did his message unto the Emperour. When the Emperour heard the Porter name Alexander the King of Egypt

## Masters.

Egypt, he said to the Porter, Go thy wayes and bring him before me, how horrible and ugly soever that his visage be, and ordain him a place before me, that he may eat and feed in my presence. The Porter brought him in immediately, and ordained him a place, and set him to meat before the Emperour: and when he had well refreshed himself, he said unto one of the Emperours Servants, My dear Friend, doe me this errand unto the Emperour, say unto him, that I pray him for the love of God and King Alexander, that he will send me his Cup of Wine: The Servant said. For the love of God, I will do it, but I beleve it will not be, for if you should but touch my Lords Cup, he will not by any means drink of the same cup again: nevertheless he did the errand.

And when that the Emperour heard him to name King Alexander, he commanded that his Cup should be filled of the best wine, & carry it to him, the which wine when he had received, he put into his Bottle: and took his Ring that Lodowick had given unto him, and put it into the Cup, & sent it again unto the Emperour.

And when the Emperour saw the Ring, he instantly knew that it was the same Ring that he had given unto King Alexander in friendship when he departed from him, and thought in his heart that King Alexander had been  
Dead

## The seven wise

dead, or else that this man is very strangely come to the King: and commanded presently that the Lazer should not depart thence, untill the time that he had spoken with them; for in no wise could he have any knowledge of him, nor yet repute him for Alexander.

After that Dinner was done and ended, the Emperour took the sick man apart, and asked him how he came by that Ring: King Alexander demanded if that he knew well the Ring: The Emperour said, I know it right well. Alexander said, What you also to whom you gave it: The Emperour said, I wot right well. How is it then, said Alexander, that you know not me, for I am Alexander, unto whom you gave the same Ring: When the Emperour heard that, he fell to the ground for sorrow, & tore his Robes and Clothes, & with many great sighings and bewailings said, O Alexander, you are the one half of my soul, where is your goodly & delicate body, now so unclean & pitifully infected, that was so fair & pleasant to behold: he answered, This is happened unto me, for the great fidelity that you have done unto me in the bed with my Wife, when you laid a naked sword betwixt you and her: wherefore she become wrath, & hated me, that she and a Knight that in former time she had loved, hath poisoned me as you may see, and now they have driven me out of my

And



## Masters.

And when the Emperour heard that, he for love took him about the neck and kissed him, & said, O my most dear and intirely beloved Brother, I sorrow to se you in this great perplexity & misery, I would to God I might dye for you. But my most dear friend, suffer patiently a little time; till that we have sent for all the Physicians & wise Masters in Physick to have their counsell and advice, if there be any remedy to be had, or hope of recovering of your health, & if it be possible to help you, we shall neither spare Lordship, Empire, nor any other goods temporal, to make you whole and sound.

In the mean time he was brought into a fair chamber richly hanged, & appointed of all manner of things that were both requisite and necessary for his ease & health. Then in all haste he sent his Messengers through all parts of the World, for the most expert and best Physicians that might be found: of which within a month after were come and assembled before the Emperour, thirtie, that were right expert and very skillfull in that Science: to whom the Emperour said, My well beloved Masters, I have a Friend that is very grievously infected with a foul Leprosie, whom I would very gladly were healed, and made as sound and whole as ever he was, sparing neither for Gold nor Silver, or any other goods whatsoever.



## The seven wise

that I have in this whole world, but that I would gladly give to recover his health again.

Then answered the Masters, All that ever is possible to be done in Physick, you shall soon understand, after that we have seen the person: And when they saw him, they knew the cause of his infirmity, and they said, It was incurable for all Physicians living.

And when the Emperour had heard that, he was right sorry in his heart, and committed it unto the helping hand of Almighty God, calling unto him most of the religious men that dwelt near unto the Court, and a number of poor people, besides many other devout persons, desired of them earnestly to make their prayers unto Almighty God, that he would vouchsafe of his infinite goodness and mercy, to make whole his dear friend King Alexander, and the sooner for their good deeds and prayers. And he himself (with many others) fasted and prayed himself to Almighty God, for the speedy recovery and health of his friend.

Now upon a time as King Alexander was at his prayers, there came unto him a voice from Heaven saying, Tell Lodowick the Emperour that if he with his own hands, will take those two little Children which his Emperess had at one burthen, & slay them, & that with the blood of them he will wash and bath his body, then his flesh shall become as fair, and as clear as the

## Masters.

the bodies of those little Children; if not, thou must never look to be cured whilst breath is in thy body, and so farewell.

When King Alexander had heard this most strange voice, he then began to think within himself, what voice it was, and from whence it came; then he replied to himself, and said, This vision is not to be feared, for it is much contrary to human nature, that any man should lay his own Sons for the recovery of the health of a strange man.

The Emperour continued both night and day in Prayer, with great devotion, still earnestly praying to God for remedy for King Alexander, never ceasing, until such time, that a voice came unto him, & said, | How long will you thus call & cry upon me? When it was openly shewed unto King Alexander by what means he might recover his health, and his body to become clear without either spot or blemish.

Now the Emperour having heard that voice, he arose and went unto King Alexander, and said unto him, Of all Friends the best and most true, blessed be the most high and everlasting God, the which never faileth them that put their whole trust in him: of whom I have knowledge, that it is shewed unto you how and in what manner you may be recovered of your leprosie, wherefore I intreat and desire you, that you will plainly lay open ur-

## The seven wise

to me how this may be don for the restozing of your former health, that we may have joy together; & if you should need any thing that may do you any good, I shall fulfil it unto my power. yea, & for your health geve all that I have to.

Alexander said, Sir, I dare not shew it to you how that I may be cured & healed of my leprosie, for it excedeth, and it is a thing against nature for to be done, therefore I will not as yet shew it you, howbeit I have great trust and confidence in you.

The Emperoz said, Alexander, put your trust in me still, for whatsoever is possible for to be done for recovering & restozing of your health, I shall do it, and therefore conceal nothing from me I pray you.

Then said Alexander, I have of God knowledge, that if you will slay your two Sons with your own hands: and wash me in their blood, I shall be whole, and therefore I have not shewed it unto you, for me thinketh it is against nature that the Father should slay his own Children for the health of a stranger. The Emperoz said, Say not that you are a stranger, for I love you as my self, and therefore if I had ten Children I should not spare one for your health.

Afterwards the Emperoz espied his time when the Empress was out of the way, and he went into the chamber where the children slept and drew out his knife, & cut both their throats.

## Masters.



and gathered the blood in a vessell, and then he bathed and washed Alexander therewith: and when he was bathed, his body and flesh was as fair and clean, as though it had been a young Child. Then the Emperour had perfect knowledge of his visage, & kissed him, saying, O good Alexander, now I see you in the same forme which I have often times delighted in.

Blessed be the Almighty God, that ever I had these children by whom your health is restored, and your body made pure and clean. And as yet there was none that had knowledg of the death of those Children, save only the Emperour and Alexander.

And when the Emperour saw that good King Alexander was now the same,



### The seven wise

him, and will ordain unto you an honourable company, & you shall go from hence about ten miles, and the next day send me a messenger, & let me know the day of your comming back again, & I shall then with great solemnity come and meet you, and you shall remain with me untill such time as I may conveniently provide for the recovery of your Realm again.

This counsell pleased King Alexander right well, and according to the Emperours will, it was performed; for on the next day following there came a messenger unto the Emperour, certifying him of the comming back again of King Alexander.

And when the Empress heard these tydings she reioyced, and said unto the Emperour, O my most best belovèd Lord and Emperour, have you not just cause to reioyce and be glad, seeing that Alexander the King of Egypt, is now comming to see you, whom of a long time you have not seen? And if it please you to go & meet him, with your Lords and Gentlemen, I shall follow you with my Ladies and Gentlewomen; and as yet she knew not of the death of her two Children.

Then rode the Emperour and Empress with a great company of Lords and Ladies to meet with good King Alexander: and when they met together, with great reverence and honor they received him, and with great joy and gladness they brought him into the Walace: And when



## Masters.

the time of dinner was neer at hand, Alexander was placed at the table between the Emperoz and the Emperesse; and all the mirth and cheer that she could make she shewed unto him.

And when the Emperour perceived that, he was right ioyfull and glad, and he was so exceeding well pleased, that he said, Dining our Florentine, it glads me above all things, that you make unto King Alexander so good cheer :

Then answered the Emperesse & said, Wherefore should I not : is not his company unto us more precious than Gold, or Silver : But unto you my renowned Lord much more, for by his means, it was that you attained unto so great honour and dignity, and by him many times you have been saved from death. The Emperoz answered & said When I pray you my only beloved Florentine, that you wil take heed to my words that I shall say unto you. Saw you not that ugly and deformed lazer, which yesterday sat before our table, and prayed me for the love of God and good King Alexander, that I would give him drink ? She said, My honourable Lord, I saw him well. a more horrible man I did never behold, Then said the Emperoz, I demand this one question of you, But case that he were King Alexander, and that he could not by any means be made whole but with the blood of your two Sonnes, both which you in one day brought into the world, you would not that

their blood should be shed, that he might bath himself therein, to the intent that thereby he might have perted health and comly favour, as you now see him have.

She answered, and said unto him, My renowned Lord & Husband, wherefore demand you of me that question? I say, & tell you of a troth, that if I had ten Sons, I should gladly slay them with my own hands, for to prepare and ordain for him a Bath, and would wish him therein my own self, rather than I should leave him in such a loathsome and miserable case, so horrible for to behold, and such danger of death withall: God might well send us more Children, but such a Friend were a thing were impossible for us ever hereafter to find throughout the whole World.

When the Emperoz heard this from her, he was well pleased in his mind, and said, O my loving Empress, had you rather have your children dead, then Alexander should languish in this Leprosie? then shall I open and shew you now the truth of the matter: that foul Lazer which you saw, was Alexander that sitteth here by us, and by that means is made whole with the blood of our two Sons, and they are dead.

As soon as the Empress did hear that, she began with extremity of sorrow mournfully to cry out, as nature would she should do, although she had said before, that she had rather

see her Childzen dead, then Alexander should remain in such pain and misery.

The Nourishers of the Childzen understanding this, they presently with great crying and weeping, ran to the Nursery and Chamber of them, and great sorrow and bewailing was made through the Emperours Court for his two Sons; and when the Nourishers of them came to the Chamber, they found the Childzen playing, and singing a song of praise & thanksgiving to the Father, Son, and the holy Ghost; for restoring again of their lives, and then they returned again in all hast unto the Emperour and the Empress, and shewed unto them how that the Childzen were living, and that about their throats where they were cut, they had circles of threed of gold; whereof was great joy and gladness in all the Court, with Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for that exceeding great miracle and wonderfull work.

After that, the Emperour with a great multitude and company of people, gathered and assembled together, went with King Alexander into Egypt, and set him again in his Royalty & possession of his Realm. And the Queen with the Knight, who had lived long together in adultery, he caus'd them both to be burnt. And when this was done: the Emperour had one only Sister, whom he married unto King Alexander.

And when King Alexander had obtained all  
his

## The seven wise

his Realm again, and was set in good rest and peace, The Emperoz returned again unto his Empire: and then King Alexander right wisely and politickly governed himself in his affaires, that he overcame his rebellious Enemies.

And when that he was seated in all his glory, peace, and might, he had thought and mind upon his Father and Mother, by whom he was cast into the Sea, who dwelled in farr parts. And from thence he sent unto them a Messenger, to let them have knowledge how that the King of Egypt upon such a day would be with them, to view those parts of the Country, and to sport himself, and to make a royall Feast with them. And when the Messenger was thither come, they received him joyfully, with bountifull entertainment, & large gifts to him given, and sent him back again, saying, That their services shall be ready at all times to do the Kings pleasure, but that could they never by power discern, that he should vouchsafe to shew them that honor whereof they were not worthy, as for to come to visit them to those parts, and to sport himself there a while.

The Messenger returned back towards the Kings Court, and there shewed the King how willingly they would receive him, and in what manner they did reward him, and how true and faithfull they were, & ready to do him service at his commandment, wherewith the King was well



## Masters.

well pleased. And when the day was come that was set, the King with a fair company rode towards his Fathers house, the which was to the Knight his Father, and Mother, unknown that he was their Son.

When the King was come near to his Fathers Castle, the Knight rode joyfully to meet & receive him, & when he came nigh to the King he alighted from his horse, & did his reverence upon his knees, but the King took him up presently, and commanded him to take horse again, & so they rode together unto the Castle.

And when that they were come thither, the Mother came unto him, and fell upon her knees and welcomed him gladly, & the King took her up as lovingly, and kissed her right friendly: & she said unto him. My most honourable Lord: you do to us (unworthy) great honour with the presence of your most honourable personage, the which we shall be never able to deserve.

After that the meat was all ready, and that time of day was come to go to dinner, the Father came with a Basen and Civer, and the Mother with a Towell, saying, Sir, all things are ready, pleaseth you to waite. And when the King saw that, he smiled, & said to himself, Now is the Song of the Pightingale true, that my Father & my Mother should gladly fulfill as I have said, if that my self should thereunto consent and suffer them to do it. But he would not suffer



## The seven wise

suffer them to do him any such service, saying, Your age is to be honoured and worshipped, & therefore I will none of it; & then he called one of his Servants unto him, whom he commanded to do that service; then said the Knight, you will not suffer us to do it for our honour, because we are not worthy thereof: the King said, Have I not said, that for your age I forbear you? when the King was set at the Table, he set his Mother on the right hand of him, and his Father on the left side, & they, as much as they might or durst, did behold his favour and countenance.

After dinner, the King presently entred into a fair Chamber, and made the Knight with his Lady to follow him in, & commanded all others to avoid their presence.

And when they were all alone, the King said, Have you no children; they answered, we have neither Son nor Daughter. And the King said, Had you never any? The Knight answered, We have had one Son, but he is long ago dead. Then the King asked of what death he died, & the Knight said, A natural death. Then the King said, if I may otherwise know or find the are you found with a most horrible fault: then asked the Knight, My most honorable & renowned Lord, wherfore enquire you so earnestly after our Son? the King answered, and said, What do I not without just cause, & therefore I must

and will know of what death he died; if you will not tel me, I shall cause you both to die a most shameful and wicked death.

When they heard that, they fell upon the ground on their knees before him, & asked him pardon and forgiveness for their lives. But the king would not suffer them to kneel, but took them up, & said, To that intent came I not unto your house, to eat your bread, and to betray you: but say to me the very truth, and you shall be pardoned; for it is given me to understand, that you have put him to death, and if that you be found culpable therein, & come to judgement, you must die a most shameful death.

Then said the Knight, My most honourable Lord pardon me my life, and I shall shew you the very truth. The King said, Fear not, for I shall do unto you no harm.

Then answered the Knight & said, My most dread soveraign Lord, we had a Son that was wise, and learned, and right well understood, and upon a time as he stood before us, & served us at the Table, there came unto the window a Nightingale that sung exceeding sweetly, whose song he begun to interpret, & to tell us what it meant, and said, This Bird singeth that I shall become so great & mighty a Lord, that it shall be to your honour & advancement, in such wise, that you my Father shal be glad to hold a basin with water to wash my hands, & my Pother a  
Tower

## The seven wise

Towel, if that I would suffer it.

And when I did hear that, I was sore moved and vexed in my mind, and so I took him upon my shoulder and cast him into the Sea for to drown him.

Then said the King, what evil might have come to you, if he had been made so great and mighty: me thinketh it should have bin for your honour, comfort, & profit. The Knight said, My renowned Lord it was no reason but a woodnes.

The King answered that it was a great foolishness of you, that you would do against the ordinance and will of God. And now ye shall know for troth I am your Son that you did cast into the Sea, and God of his great mercy and goodnesse hath saved me, & by his grace hath brought and preserved me to this estate and dignity.

And the Father and Mother hearing that, with fear and joy replenished and amazed, did fall flat to the ground; whom he lovingly and friendly took up, saying, Fear not, but rather rejoyce & be glad, for you shall suffer no harm, but my explanation shall be to your glory, joy & profit; and so he kist both his Father & Mother with great joy and gladnesse. Then began the Mother to weep and lament greatly, and the King said unto her, Leave off your sorrowing and weeping, and be of good cheer, for in my Realm you shall be honoured above me, during my life; and so he took them both with

Masters.

with him into his Kingdome, where the<sup>e</sup>  
dwelled a long time together in honour, & joy<sup>e</sup>  
and ended their days with comfort and love of  
all the people.

Here followeth the application of the Example  
to the purpose.

**T**hen said Dioclesian the Emperours Son,  
Lord have you understood what I have said,  
the Emperour said, Right well: then said the  
Son, My most honorable and redoubted Fa-  
ther, although that God hath given and indued  
me with wisdom, and understanding aboue o-  
there, that shall not be an impayring of your ho-  
nour and might, but more for the preservation  
& maintenance of the same: so in like manner  
the Kings excellent Majestie, which has no-  
thing to the hinderance of the Father, but this  
rather for his worship, profit, & greater comfort.  
For as long as they lived, it was in very great  
joy and mirth, that they were loved of the peo-  
ple, and honoured of his Kingdome. Then said  
the Emperour, my beloved Son, I will wholly  
relinquish all the Empire unto you to Govern and  
rule, for I perceive well by your Narratio that  
you have to me declared, that it is best for me,  
and most for mine ease, that I now leave this  
hazardous and tedious business, and the labour &  
care of a King, and betake me to my rest and

## The seven wise

case. I am old & feeble. Then answered the Sonne and said unto his Father, My most honourable Lord and Father, so shall it not be; but as long as you live, you shall have the authority & government of the Empire, to do your command, as it appertaineth unto an Emperour; but in all the businesses that are laborious and troublesom, I will alway be ready to minister any service that possibly I can, according to my bounden duty.

How Iudgement was given upon the Emperesse, and how she and her Lover were put to death.

**T**hen the Emperour commanded the iudges and iustices to sit in iudgement, & to bring again the Emperesse before them with the Ladies, & also the Ribauld her best beloved, clothed in the vesture & habit of a woman, whom he did cause to stand next unto the Emperesse. Then the Emperours Son asked sentence and just iudgement upon them, saying,

My most honourable Lord and Father, even as you are Emperour of all the world, and that your Maiesty and power requireth to do true justice unto all your subjects that desire it: So now I demand, that you this day do give right sentence, and true iudgement upon the untruth, falshood and shame, which were put and alleadged.



## Masters.

ged unto me by the Empress, for the which accusations I have been seven times led unto the Gallows, and have stood in great jeopardy and peril of my life, & al so that she hath been to you untrue of her body, as you have seen by good proof made before you; on the which I ask judgement; and therefore command your Judges and Justices to give sentence thereupon, according to Right, Equity, and Law.

As soon as the Empress heard this, she fell flat to the Earth before the Emperor, and asked mercy & forgiveness for her just offence and misdoing; but it helped nor profited her nothing, for the Son would have right, & desired judgement. Then speak the Judges and Justices. Her own mis-deeds condemn her, & the report of her Lemman by her kept and found, therefore we give sentence against the Empress, that she shall be bound to a Horse-tail, & drawn through all the streets of the City to the place of Execution, and there to be burnt. We judge and give sentence against the Ribauld, that he shall be quartered and smitten in pieces, and his flesh cast to the Hounds, & Birds of the air, for to devour him: and this sentence was approved and allowed of all people.

Hereafter in short time dyed the Emperor, and Dioclesian his Son governed and ruled the Empire with great wisdom, and always held and kept his Masters with him in great honour

The seyen wise Masters .

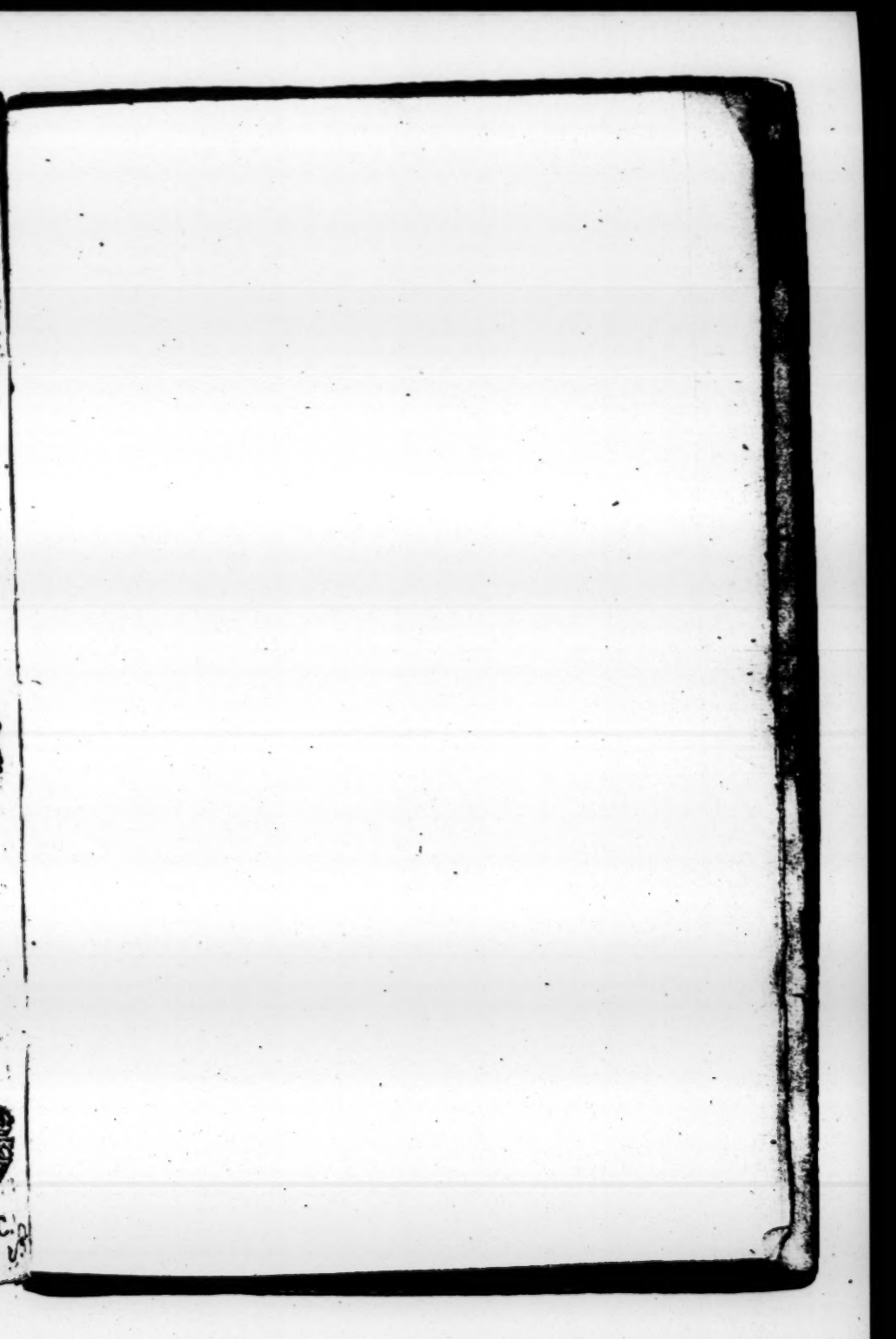
and glozy: By whose counsel and wisdom he  
goberved the Empire, and he excelled all his  
Predecessors in riches, and doing right and ju-  
stice; and his Masters so loved him aboue all o-  
thers in the world, that many times they put  
themselves in great perill and jeopardy of  
their liues for him, and so ended their  
days in great joy and honour,  
to the praise of Almighty

G D D.



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181

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